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DAVID MECEY

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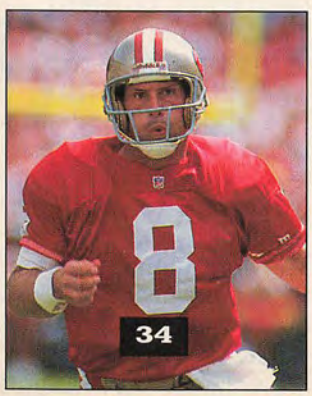
WET & WILD

From the shimmering Bahamian shores, we present the 1993 SPORT Magazine swimsuit spectacular.

BRIAN DRAKE



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Wet & Wild

OUR ANNUAL SWIMSUIT SPECTACULAR

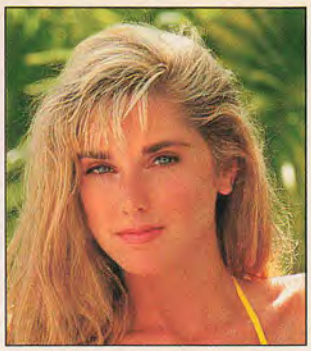
The view from the Ocean Club was breathtaking—straight from a postcard. And although civilization has infringed on the islands that Columbus sailed around a half-millennium ago, the Bahamas are no doubt as picturesque, tranquil and alluring as ever. But this year a new crew of explorers arrived—and they dropped more than just their anchors.

Our annual swimsuit photo shoots were staged on Paradise Island—a befitting name for the place—in the Bahamas. A shell's toss from Nassau, the island provided outstanding accommodations for our troops. We stayed at Merv Griffin's Paradise Island Resort and Casino, and dined at the Prince George Dockside Restaurant and Cafe, owned by Zackary Galantis. The crew was treated to a fabulous meal, while crafty lensman David Mecey took the opportunity to photograph model Rachel Wolven up on the roof, with cruise ships floating in the background.

Our model selection is the cream of the crop and includes the return of last year's cover model, April Storms, whose career has taken off faster than a screaming new 300ZX Turbo. Our newest cover model, Jill Pierce, along with Denise Richards, Carla Kemp, Lehr Lemar and Miss California 1992 Shannon Stone, found working with our crew, well, entertaining.

Life is better in the Bahamas. No pressure, no headaches, no problems. People are nicer in the Bahamas too. Take, for example, Robert Carron, Graham Dupuch and Ted Adderley, who went out of their way to assist and pamper us during our expedition. They bragged quite a bit to their peers and associates about how hard they worked, but truth be known, we often caught

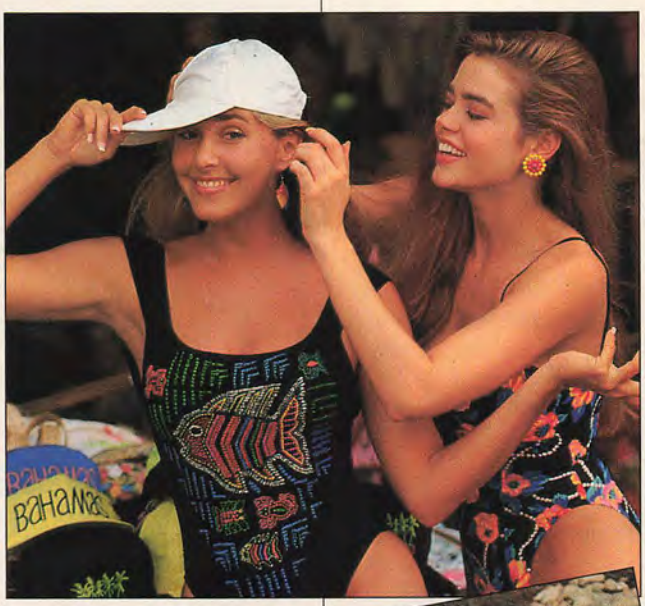
Jill Pierce

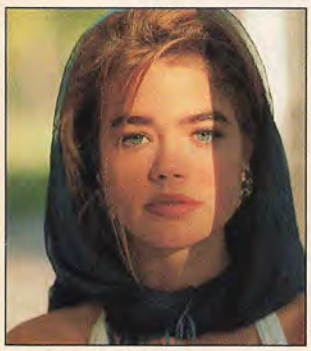


April Storms

Lehr Lemar

Rachel Wolven





Denise Richards

Shannon Stone

Carla Kemp

Swimsuit production credits see page 84

'em hanging loose under an open-shade umbrella during the shoots.

Others who provided assistance and safe haven for our crew were Merv Griffin's Paradise Island Resort and Casino's very own Inga, Amada and Carlton. Carla Lockhart, from the Ministry of Tourism, was extremely helpful, even with the most mundane of tasks, including holding shinny reflectors knee-deep in the bay for one of our water shots.

Others who made the trip more of a vacation than an assignment were Tom, from Delta Airlines in Miami, and Floris, from Avis Rental Cars in Nassau. Raymond Francis, executive assistant manager of the Ocean Club, and his assistants were a great help, as was Steve Symonet, with the ground transportation in the Bahamas, who carted us all around the island. Captain Wayne Scott, of the Calypso, made our travel between Blue Lagoon and Paradise Island a dry one, and Tom Kahl, of Outdoor Experience, supplied outdoor gear, wet suits and snorkels.

Photo assistants Billy White and Ric Moore provided not only able image-making abilities, but realistic sound effects and comic relief at each photo location as well. Swimsuit stylist Francesca Passeri coordinated the suits with the settings, and Ian Berger, proprietor of Cafe Ian, assisted in the debugging of photographer/screenwriter David Mecey's cameras, which were infected with a bad case of Miami sand fleas. Michelle Van Der Hule traveled 8,000 miles to cover the hair-stylist chores for our many photo sessions.

Why do we produce an annual swimsuit edition? For the million readers out there looking to see hot women in a cool setting. After all, SPORT Magazine is the oldest and largest sports monthly in the country. And if there's any question as to who started this swimsuit cavalcade, refer to the "Swim Queens" article from the August 1954 edition of SPORT. But first, check out this issue for the "Wet & Wild" girls of SPORT '93.★

—Ira Gabriel
Picture Editor

Wet & Wild

SPORT MAIL

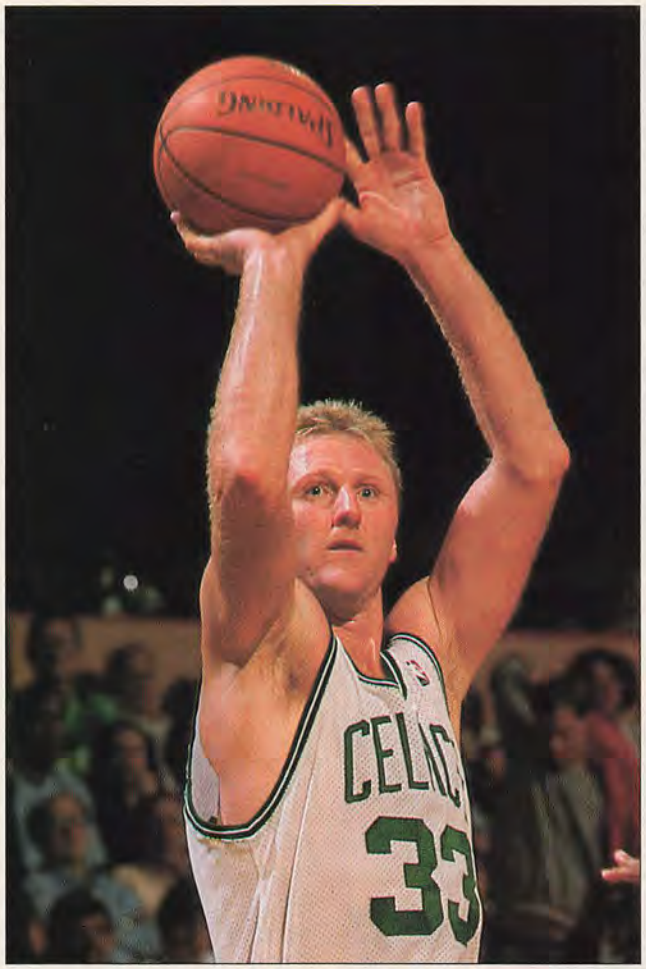
LEGENDARY LARRY

Thanks for the incisive look at Larry Bird's great career (Sport View, November). He was to basketball what apple pie is to America. My memories of the Blond Bomber from French Lick will never fade. Thanks for the memories, Larry.

Chris T. Shaw
Clarksburg, West Virginia

It was a real pleasure to read that nostalgia piece about Larry Bird. I sure hate to see him go. He and Magic Johnson energized the NBA with their on-court duels, and the Lakers-Celtics battles will go down as the best examples of the NBA's Golden Age.

Steve Alenski
Bowling Green, Kentucky


STEVE LIPOFSKY

BLOODY BAD

I'm writing in regard to your story about football brutality ("Bloodsport," December). I don't care how much money is involved in the sport, it's still a game. For Jack Tatum and George Atkinson to compare it to Vietnam is ridiculous, even if they were the kings of dirty play.

Also, in regard to Lester Hayes saying that the Raiders had a $2,000 bounty for anyone who could knock out Steve Largent, this is not the message that should be given to youngsters playing the game. I strongly believe the NFL should ban any possibility of these players ever being in the Hall of Fame. I like the Raiders now—Art Shell as coach gives them class. But in the Tatum/Atkinson days, my favorite team was whoever was playing against the Raiders.

Brian Wetzel
Hinton, West Virginia

That was one charming story you did about dirty football tactics. I suppose it shouldn't be surprising that players have turned a rough-and-tumble game into the science of body mangling, but it wasn't any less disgusting. Nice of them to not want to cripple the knees, but if they can separate a shoulder, that's great!

So they're not trying to kill anybody, they just want to cripple them for a few weeks. Real humanitarians. I don't think I'll ever watch football with the same attitude again. You've opened my eyes, but I don't like what I'm seeing.

Joseph O'Connell
Medford, Massachussetts

THOUGHTFUL THURMAN

Your interview with Thurman Thomas was very interesting (The SPORT Q&A, December). It was easy to write him off as just another young, loudmouthed idiot, especially after the helmet incident. But he's much more thoughtful than I would have guessed. Maybe he doesn't always show the best judgment, but he did display considerable insight in the interview, and it's now easier to understand him.

Anita Jackson
Brooklyn, New York

MAVERICKS MISERY

Those crazy Mavericks, huh? ("Maverick Meltdown," December.) Pinned their hopes on a helluva player with a helluva problem, and they went straight down the toilet. All I can say is I'm sure glad I didn't have to make any of those decisions. The definition of a true dilemma is a situation where any of your choices are painful. That's why the cliche refers to the "horns of a dilemma"—you get stuck every which way. And the Mavericks you described had horns all over.

Dan Postano
Cicero, Illinois

PITIABLE PENGUINS

You people hit the mark with the story about the Penguins ("Triumph & Tragedy," December). The story of their last couple of years is incredible; talk about highs and lows, ups and downs. That team and its town have gone through just about everything.

Allen Carpenter
Hershey, Pennsylvania

TOUGH BUT TRAGIC

Mike Tyson, the champion of the boxing arena, had everything going for him (Sport Talk, September). His was a rags-to-riches-to-rags tragedy, all of his own making. Everything has been taken away, including his freedom. You brought out the sad reality of life in jail, and it is truly a shame what Tyson's life has become. But he can't blame anyone else...or can he? Tyson was young and foolish, but what about the people around him, like his trainers and manager? Didn't they see this coming?

Rashid Mahmood
Jersey City, New Jersey

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HOMOGENIZED BASKETBALL

THE NBA AIN'T NO FUN NO MORE

Say it ain't so, Moe.

Maybe by the time you read this, Doug Moe will have reverted to forgetting his socks on road trips and wearing sportcoats he just pulled out of his shaving kit.

But if the Doug Moe wardrobe-and-hair makeover proves irreversible, the 76ers will be stuck with a coach who looks like Barbie and Ken's uncle.

This would be easier to accept were it an isolated incident and not a symptom of a widespread malaise in the NBA.

The NBA ain't no fun no more. Too serious. Too homogenized. Too corporate. Too clean. The whole league has had a Doug Moe makeover.

And there is much I miss about the old NBA. Cheering, for instance. People still cheer at NBA games, but only when instructed to do so by the PA announcer or message-board operator.

Example: I'm in Salt Lake City, at the new Delta Center. John Stockton is dribbling slowly downcourt. The crowd is quiet. Suddenly, the fans begin to cheer, and yet *nothing has happened!*

I glance up at the message board, which reads: "MAKE NOISE!" I wonder what would happen if the message was: "QUACK LIKE A DUCK AND HAND YOUR WALLET TO THE NEAREST USHER!"

And say, whatever happened to nicknames? Used to be you could have intelligent basketball discussions using only names such as Whopper, Dipper, Iceman, Poodles, Pearl, Pistol, Butterbean, Jellybean, Doc, Tree, World and Chocolate Thunder.

Now you've got Mailman and 250 guys named James. People wonder how we're going to replace Bird and Magic. I wonder how we're going to replace Darryl Dawkins.

Dawk was the last NBA player to name his dunks (Spine-Chiller Supreme was a personal favorite), to breach two shoe contracts simultaneously by wearing a different brand on each foot, and to invent his own planet—Lovetron.

Who will replace the spare eloquence of the soon-to-be-retired Moses Malone? Malone once offered a playoff prediction for his 76ers: "Fo', fo', fo.'"

SCOTT OSTLER

Nobody shoots weird anymore. Magic Johnson retired the last real hook shot. Signature shots—Dick Barnett's leg-kick jumper, Kareem's sky hook, Wilt's fall-away and finger-roll, George Gervin's fling, Doc J's swoop—are gone and have not been replaced.

Sure, there are still a few wacky, inventive and unique shots in the NBA today, but they're all being taken by Michael Jordan.

There's more dunking in the new NBA. That was once a thrilling shot, but now even the ball boys dunk. And every time a player dunks, he grabs the rim and hangs there. Shouldn't there be a 10-second rule on rim-hanging?

The refs are less colorful now. A decade ago, an NBA ref making a traveling call would dramatically prance and arm-wheel, looking like a runaway grain-harvester. The old cowboys, the Earl Stroms, are being phased out, and order is enforced by stockbrokers with whistles.

Announcers? Forget it. Celtics play-by-play man Johnny Most, now retired, sounded like Walter Winchell with a hangover. Objective reporting wasn't his strength. Most nicknamed Bullets Rick Mahorn and Jeff Ruland "McFilthy and McNasty." He dubbed Magic Johnson "Crybaby," as in: "Kareem gets the rebound and outlets to Crybaby. Crybaby feeds back to Kareem...."

Most has left the game to play-by-play guys who should be calling out Greyhound Bus destinations. And today's PA announcer is a fellow who was too annoying to get a job as a TV game-show host.

The old NBA was the Lakers in their DC-3, surviving an emergency landing in an Iowa cornfield. The new NBA is David Robinson publicly pleading for a private luxury jet for the Spurs. And getting it.

The old NBA was gyms and arenas. The new NBA is "palaces" with biosphere-like luxury suites for guys who dress like the new Doug Moe.

The old NBA was influenced by the ABA, with its radical fringe of unkempt outlaw hoopsters. The new NBA is influenced by the MBAs.

The new NBA is closed practices, designer ice cream on the team plane, FAN-tastic TV commercials, $50 cheap seats, salary-cap discussions, and games in Tokyo.

I don't blame David Stern. He may be the wisest man in sport. The blandizing of the NBA was inevitable.

And yet, I remember a pie fight in 1979. The San Diego Clippers' front office, which probably consisted of a guy named Hobey, decided a pie fight would be splendid halftime entertainment. Throw a tarp over midcourt and let a few overserved yahoos have at it.

It was loads of fun, and the cleanup delayed the start of the second half by only about 20 minutes.

That same pie fight today would need approval of three NBA subcommittees, would be sponsored by Hostess and scored by trained judges, would have regional playoffs and a national finals, and would be available on video.

Is there hope? Some. Shaq shows promise as an uncontrollable flake. Larry Johnson wears a dress as well as any NBA player, past or present. There is always hope that lightning will short out the PA system and message board in Portland. Jerry Tarkanian seems willing to give society's castoffs a 14th chance.

Speaking of Tark, as soon as I hear him submitting to a wardrobe-and-hair makeover, the new NBA is in my rear-view mirror and I'm movin' on to the Seniors Golf Tour.★

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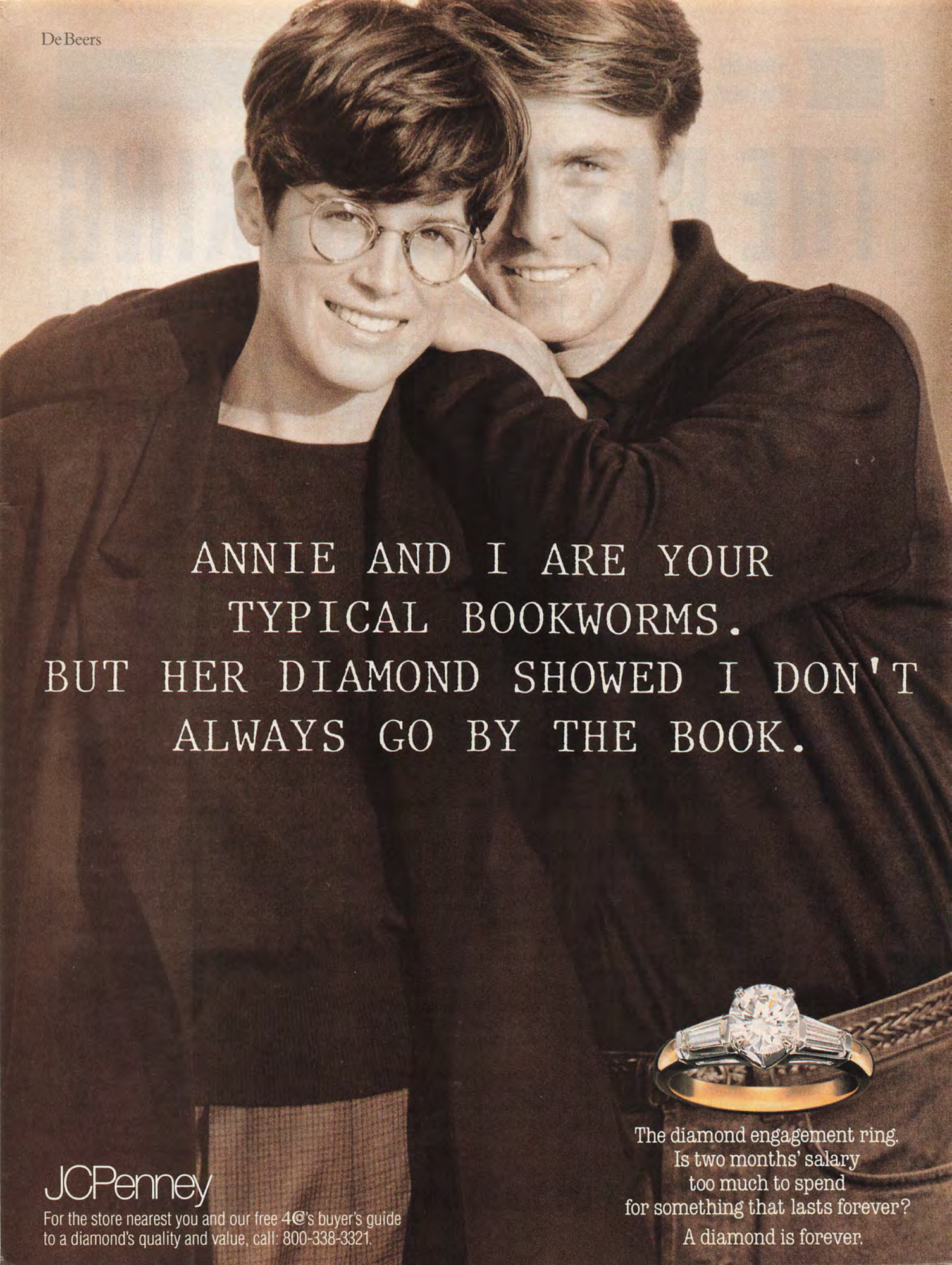

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THE BEST IN BOXING

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DAVE BLACK

Ask a group of fight fans to name the boxing capital of the world, and it's likely to reach a split decision between Las Vegas and Atlantic City. Frankly, Los Angeles beats 'em both.

The gambling cities get the flashy heavyweight mega-matches, but for consistently scheduled, high-level boxing, nothing tops Fight Night at the Great Western Forum in LA. Boxing at the Forum, the arena better known as the home of the Lakers and the NHL's Kings, is LA's best-kept secret.

"The boxing at the Forum has been excellent," says Al Bernstein, ESPN's boxing analyst. "The matchmaking is generally excellent, and it hosts many world championships."

The only comparable venue is New York City's Madison Square Garden, which stages one fight program a month, and generally draws just 3,000 fans. The Forum, in contrast, has a fight every other Monday night, with crowds in the 6,000 range.

Jerry Buss, owner of the Lakers and the Forum, has reportedly lost millions on the fights over the last decade, although fight operations are supposedly now in the black. Along the way, Buss has provided Southern Californians with some of the best boxing in the country.

During the decade that ended in August 1992, the Forum hosted 1,100 fights. Thirty-two world title bouts have been held there within the past four

(Continued on page 14)

BASKETBALL

THE COUSY COMPARISON

In basketball circles, many see traces of NBA great Bob Cousy in the play of Utah Jazz point guard John Stockton. Why? The two men share similar builds, roles and skills. Cousy, however, doesn't see any likeness.

"I've seen John play a half a dozen times, and I don't relate to his game in any way," says Cousy. "The only player I've ever related to, believe it or not, was Ernie DiGregorio."

DiGregorio, a player of far less stature than Stockton, spent only five years in the NBA before retiring in 1978. While coaching the Cincinnati Royals in the early '70s, Cousy scouted DiGregorio at Providence College.

"When you're scouting a point guard, you have the tendency as the ball flows downfloor to anticipate what he should be doing," says Cousy. "I'd be watching Ernie get the ball over half court, and I could see the play developing, the defense taking its position, and I'd say, 'All right, now, you got to dip the left shoulder to move the defense slightly left and then drop the bounce pass to the right.' He almost performed everything I was thinking of a few seconds later."

—Jeff Weinstock

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(Continued from page 12)

years. While the early years typically featured unknown local kids, the Forum graduated into a major showcase that has headlined Julio Cesar Chavez, Michael Dokes, Terry Norris, Tony Tucker, Bonecrusher Smith, Greg Page and a host of others.

Now a typical evening includes a half-dozen fights: a few knockouts, a couple of 10-rounders and a steady stream of beautiful women competing for the never-ending Miss Ringsider contest. There's an on-site restaurant where you can eat rack of lamb, a thriving bar, and a friendly, upscale ambience. A few celebrities usually show, including Magic Johnson, a regular.

To kick off its second decade of boxing, the Forum hosted one of its most significant fights yet. East LA's own Oscar de la Hoya (pictured on previous page), the only American boxer to win a gold at the Barcelona Olympics, made his pro debut in November, making quick work of an overmatched Lamar Williams.

Critics of the Forum's Fight Night claim it's too local, with its emphasis on Mexican fighters in the smaller weight divisions. But Bernstein says it's natural to feature them because of Southern California's large number of Latin American fans and its proximity to Mexico. "The fighters are highly rated," he says, "and they're only local if the fights don't have wider meaning, but they do. You see many championships there."

According to Joe Goosen, a former commentator for HBO's TVKO and a member of the organization that helped develop Michael Nunn and Terry Norris: "It's a very together operation. They've got it down to a science."

Goosen attributes criticism of the fighting there to East/West rivalries that so often pollute any discussion of the relative merits of anything happening on either coast. "It's a jealousy thing," says Goosen of Forum Fight Night critics. He contends that there's a myth that tougher fighters come from big-city ghettos back East.

"Like a kid from South Central or Tijuana has it easy. Right," he says. "It's that pompous attitude toward the West Coast. I don't buy it. Madison Square Garden? No competition. The Forum puts on better fights."

Carl Moretti, spokesman for Madison Square Garden boxing, won't go that far, but he will concede that Forum Fight Nights are pretty good. In fact, he says, "They're real good."

—Terry Mulgannon

ENTERTAINMENT

THE GOOD RAP ON SPORTS

JOHNNY CRAWFORD

Ever since the Chicago Bears came out with the "Super Bowl Shuffle" in 1985, sports and hip-hop have been as inseparable as Siamese twins.

Michael Jordan can be heard on Ice Cube's latest CD, "The Predator." Rap star Hammer had Tim Hardaway, Chris Mullin and the rest of the Golden State Warriors in his "This Is The Way We Roll" video, and in "2 Legit 2 Quit," Hammer included David Robinson, Roger Clemens and Evander Holyfield. The first rap song to win a Grammy—in 1989—was DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince's "I Think I Can Beat Mike Tyson." Enough said.

Hip-hop music has become the natural anthem for sports in the '90s, as most rappers and a large proportion of athletes are young black men. Meanwhile, sports and hip-hop each have wide, cross-racial constituencies, and together, the appeal is almost universal for American youth.

Listen to the "A Tribe Called Quest" CD, and you'll hear references to Scott Skiles, Magic Johnson, Karl Malone, Lou Brock and Bo Jackson. Listen to any hip-hop music CD, as opposed to rock or country music CDs, and you'll likely find it filled with sports analogies.

But now it's athletes who are taking this affair with rap to a higher level. Miami Dolphins All-Pro tight end Keith Jackson came out with his own rap CD on City Block Records called "K Jack-N-America." Seattle Mariners All-Star outfielder Ken Griffey Jr. had a bass hit of his own in Sea-town and beyond with his rapping on Kid Sensation's single "The Way I Swing," on the Nastymix Records label. The song's overwhelming popularity prompted baseball card shops to start carrying it. Now even Charles Barkley is rapping in commercials as if he were Public Enemy's Chuck D.

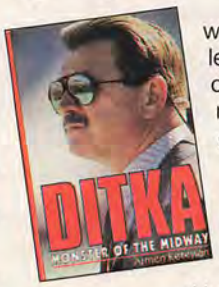
According to rapper May May, whose father, Muhammad Ali, has figured in numerous rap songs, "When rappers mention athletes in their songs, for them it's a release to acknowledge their heroes.

"You see Caucasian heroes all the time....It makes sense that rappers would acknowledge their heroes in their music because that's really the only thing they had to look up to while growing up."

—Darryl Howerton

BOOK REVIEW

A FIERY DITKA



Ditka: Monster of the Midway, by Armen Keteyian (Pocket Books, $19.95, 209 pages).

When an unauthorized biography hits the bookstores, the writer is often accused of using erroneous information to sell the book. That accusation cannot be pinned on Keteyian, who writes a fascinating story about Chicago Bears head coach Mike Ditka.

The reader comes to know the fiery Ditka through his family, friends, coworkers and acquaintances. We learn that, despite his 100-plus career coaching wins, Ditka is not viewed by everyone as a great coach.

"He's too busy yelling at players, yelling at officials, to generate the next move," says former Bears offensive coordinator Ed Hughes.

Hughes believes Ditka's coaching shortcomings are why the Bears were trounced by the 49ers in the 1988 NFC championship game.

—William Ladson

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Alice In Chains—Dirt (Columbia) 445•833

David Bowie—David Live (Rykodisc) 438•218/398•214

Marvin Gaye's Grt. Hits (Motown) 367•565

Aretha Franklin—30 Greatest Hits (Atlantic) 350•793/390•799

Van Morrison—Moondance (Warner Bros.) 349•803

Jethro Tull—Aqualung (Chrysalis) 345•157

John Lennon—Live In New York City (Capitol) 342•774

Motown's 25 #1 Hits From 25 Years (Motown) 319•996/399•998

Stevie Wonder's Orig. Musiquarium I (Tamla) 314•997/394•999

Best Of Carly Simon, Vol. 1 (Elektra) 291•856

Eagles—Hotel California (Asylum) 286•948

Meat Loaf—Bat Out Of Hell (Epic) 279•133

Boston (Epic) 269•209

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Randy Travis—Greatest Hits, Vol. 1 (Warner Bros.) 448•654

Vince Gill—I Still Believe In You (MCA) 448•571

Hi-Five—Keep On Goin' On (Jive) 444•331

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Suzanne Vega—99.9° F (A&M) 447•516

Collin Raye—In This Life (Epic) 447•268

Damn Yankees—Don't Tread (Warner Bros.) 445•759

Pat Metheny—Secret Story (Geffen) 444•422

Morrissey—Your Arsenal (Sire/Warner Bros.) 444•398

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k.d. lang—Ingenue (Warner Bros./Sire) 435•404

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Melissa Etheridge—Never Enough (Island) 435•180

Tina Turner—Simply The Best (Capitol) 433•342

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Rod Stewart–Downtown Train/Selections From The Storyteller Anthology (Warner Bros.) 425•322

Rush—Chronicles (Mercury) 423•780/393•785

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Eric Clapton—Time Pieces (Polydor) 423•467

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Grateful Dead–Skeletons From The Closet (Warner Bros.) 378•406

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Fleetwood Mac—Grt. Hits (Warner Bros.) 375•782

Journey's Greatest Hits (Columbia) 375•279

Best Of The Doors (Elektra) 357•616/397•612

The Police—Every Breath You Take–The Singles (A&M) 348•318

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Bad Company–10 From 6 (Atlantic) 341•313

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The Charlie Daniels Band—A Decade Of Hits (Epic) **321•067**

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BASKETBALL

HORACE GRANT RATES THE POWER FORWARDS

Horace Grant is one of the primary reasons why the Chicago Bulls are the two-time defending NBA champions. The 6-foot-10 power forward is an outstanding offensive rebounder, having grabbed 344 offensive boards during the 1991-92 season, a club record.

Grant can play the other end of the floor as well. His quickness and agility enable him to pull down defensive rebounds, and he's the key to the Bulls' defensive traps.

Grant's success on the court is why SPORT asked him to rate the top 15 power forwards in the NBA and explain how he would defend them on the court.

1. **CHARLES BARKLEY—PHOENIX SUNS**: "He's the Michael Jordan of power forwards. Getting physical with Barkley won't work. He'll still get his 30 points. You have to frustrate Barkley by double-teaming him and making him get on his teammates. That takes a lot from his game."

2. **KARL MALONE—UTAH JAZZ**: "He runs the floor pretty good for a guy his size. You've got to time everything in order to defend Karl. In fact, the majority of the time, I block two or three of his shots. Whenever you block a guy's shot a couple of times—no matter who it is—it will cause some problems with his game."

3. **DETLEF SCHREMPF—INDIANA PACERS**: "He handles the ball like a small forward. If he's on, you have to dial 911 and get some help. We double-teamed Detlef quite a few times, and we kept the ball out of his hands."

4. **BUCK WILLIAMS—PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS:** "This is one guy who doesn't care about glory or fame. Buck's work ethic is as good as any power forward. He's going for the same things I'm going for: rebounds, loose balls and blocked shots. So I have to use my youth and quickness against him."

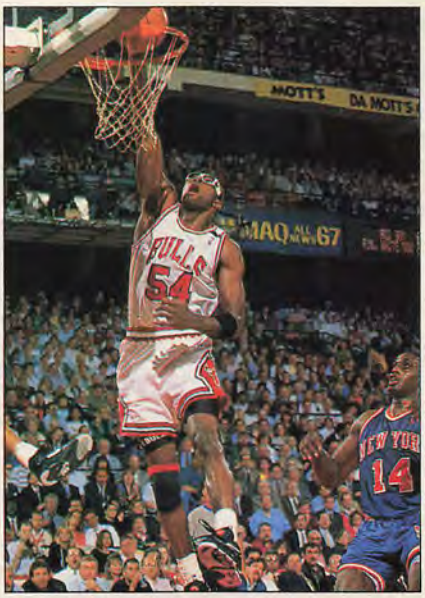
5. **KEVIN MCHALE—BOSTON CELTICS:** "If I were a general manager, I'd love to have a guy like Kevin on my team. The guy's footwork is unbelievable. The way he moves in the low post is like art. He also has those long arms that reach out to New York. Since I can't cut off his arms, I have to use speed and quickness against Kevin. You have to beat him up the floor so he won't get position on you."

6. **CHARLES OAKLEY—NEW YORK KNICKS:** "He's become one of the most powerful enforcers in the game. I have my bath ready after I play against him. The guy pushes, scratches and holds. If biting was legal, Charles would do that. You just pray the officials catch some of his tactics."

7. **DENNIS RODMAN—DETROIT PISTONS:** "He's a great defensive player. His rebounding average attests to that. It seems like his hands are like magnets when it comes to getting the basketball. You have to play Dennis like Oakley and hope that he fouls you."

8. **KEVIN WILLIS—ATLANTA HAWKS:** "He has an advantage in strength and height. Kevin has to be on the blocks to score though. And I can beat him up and down the court. I can block a taller man like that with my quickness."

9. **LARRY NANCE—CLEVELAND CAVALIERS:** "He has good jumping ability and he can block shots. However, I think Larry dislikes the physical game. He was on the West Coast for most of his career, where physical play wasn't the style."



LOU CAPOZZOLA / NBA PHOTOS

10. **DERRICK COLEMAN—NEW JERSEY NETS:** "He knows how to score in the low post. However, there's a rumor going around that Derrick's work habits aren't that great. So if you go on the court with the mentality of a hard worker, he'll get frustrated. I'm a very hard worker, and Derrick cannot match me in that department."

11. **CHARLES SMITH—NEW YORK KNICKS:** "There's another rumor going around that Charles doesn't like physical contact, so you have to pop him a little bit and go from there. However, he's a good ball handler, and he can score from all over the court if you let him."

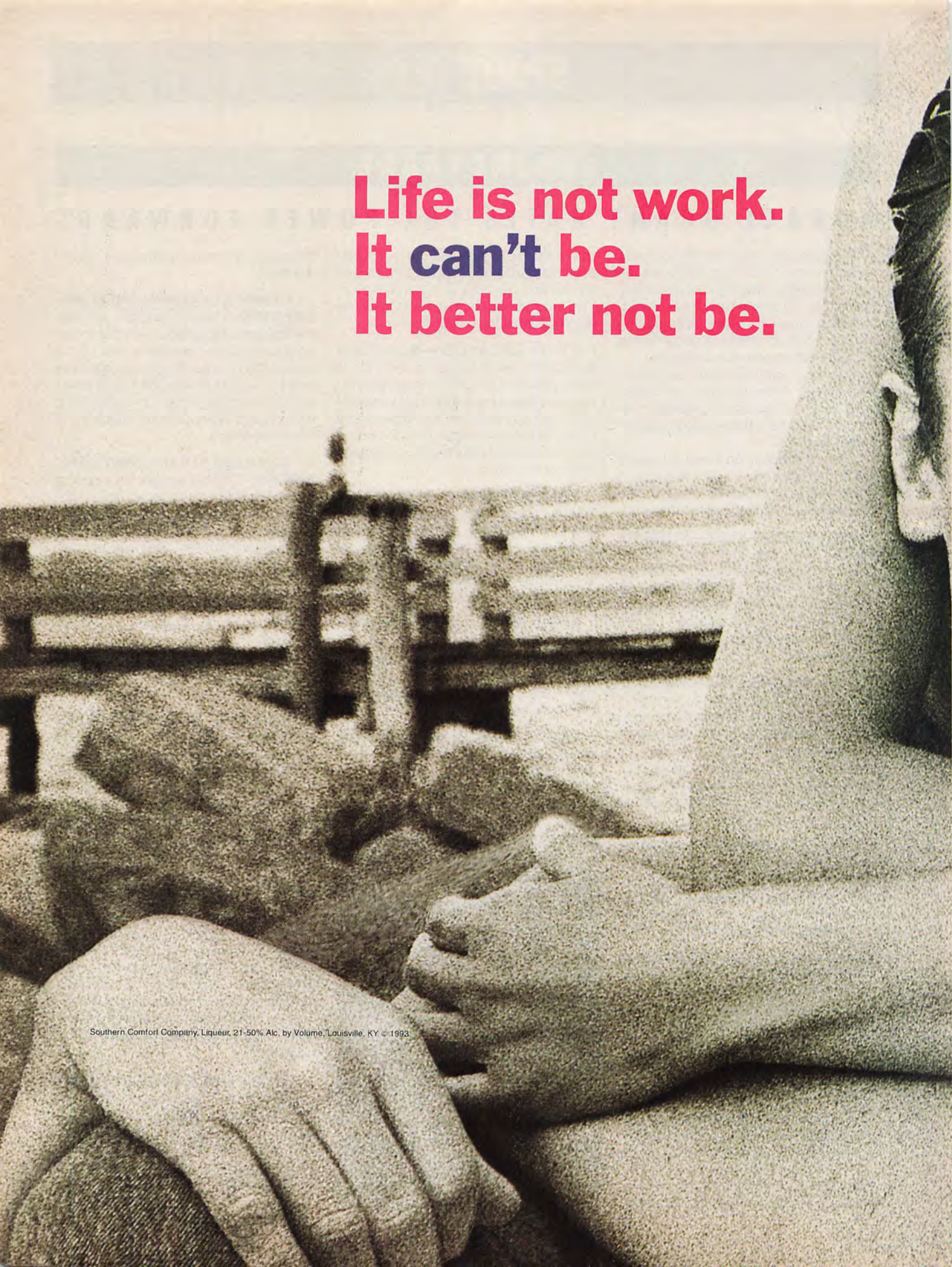
12. **OTIS THORPE—HOUSTON ROCKETS:** "He runs the floor as well as Karl Malone. If Otis gets the ball in the paint, he's going to score and get fouled. You stop him by giving him the outside jumper. He's not very good in that department."

13. **SAM PERKINS—LOS ANGELES LAKERS:** "Warning: You cannot give him the outside shot. Sam beat us with that three-pointer in the opening game of the 1991 Finals. He also has great footwork inside. However, the knock against Sam is that he doesn't play a physical game. He's more of a finesse player."

14. **SHAWN KEMP—SEATTLE SUPERSONICS:** "The knock against Shawn is his inexperience on the floor. Remember, he didn't play college basketball. Shawn gets into foul trouble quickly, but I believe he can become a *great* player. Right now, I can handle him because he's not a physical player. Furthermore, Shawn sometimes tries to do too much on the floor and that hurts his game."

15. **TOM CHAMBERS—PHOENIX SUNS:** "Here's another guy who can shoot the ball from the outside. Like Nance, Tom doesn't like physical contact. Whenever he comes through the lane, you have to let him know that it's going to be a rough game for him."

—George Castle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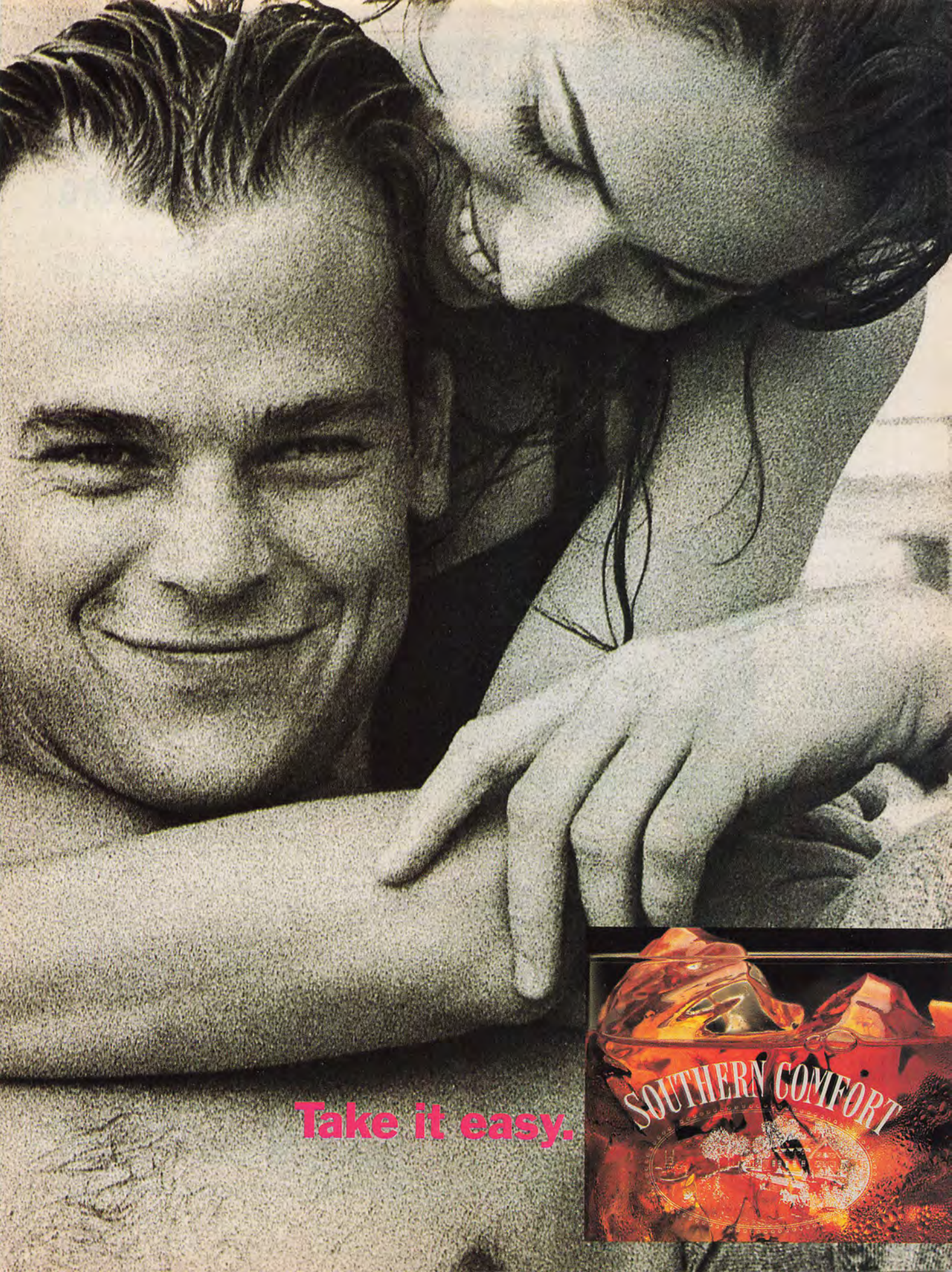
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SOUTHERN COMFORT

THE RETURN OF BO JACKSON...DOUBTS ARE ERASED AS BO PREPARES FOR LIFE WITH THE WHITE SOX BY RICK WEINBERG

Rick Weinberg

He's missed almost two full major-league seasons, and there were serious doubts about him ever stepping into the batter's box again, but **Bo Jackson**, complete with a new hip and a new attitude, vows he'll be back playing for the White Sox this season.

"I've never doubted myself," Jackson says. "Why should I start now?"

Bo and his new hip have been tirelessly working out at Comiskey Park in recent months, five hours a day, five days a week. "And not only is my hip flexible," he says, "but it has more flexibility than ever before."

When we last saw Bo, he was hobbling down the first-base line during an exhibition game—sad, really, considering that a year earlier, he was legging out routine grounders to short. With his degenerative hip, though, he'd lost so much speed that **Cecil Fielder** might've blown him away in the 40-yard dash by 30 yards. Jackson, who says he'll never play football again, was forced to undergo surgery for a new hip and has been rehabilitating feverishly ever since.

"I haven't lifted a single weight, but I've done just about everything else," he says. "I've done every hip exercise known to man and a few man doesn't know. I've concentrated solely on my hip, stomach and legs; I'm not doing anything with my arms or upper body. Don't need to. The one thing I haven't lost is strength. I'm doing hundreds of mountain climbers, crunches, sit-ups, frog-leaps, and box-jumping. I'm working my hamstrings and quad muscles. I'm told my hip muscles are stronger now than they were before."

The limp is gone, as is the pain. And this month, Bo will begin to hit live pitching and run full speed. "I'm not disappointed about having to give up football, about missing almost two years of baseball, and having to undergo hip-replacement surgery," he says. "Things happen. You accept it and do what you have to do to accomplish your goals, your dreams. My dream is to give back something to the White Sox. They picked me up after the Royals let me go. They knew I wouldn't be playing for a while. They placed their faith in me. I want to repay them. I owe them one."

RON VESELY (2)

Bo Jackson's hip on the road to recovery.

Final pitches: The way the Braves have played with **Ron Gant's** mind over the years, there's no chance he'll stay with them when he becomes a free agent after the '93 season. Gant, you'll remember, was demoted from the majors to Double-A in 1989, and then was benched for part of last year's World Series. "I can't see how he can stay there," says one NL coach....It pays to be patient. For proof look at **Brady Anderson** and **Mike Devereaux**. They did nothing for several years and were closer to being out of baseball than in the starting lineup. But the Orioles stuck with them, and now they're impact players....Hiring **Lou Piniella** is the best move the Mariners have made since drafting **Ken Griffey Jr.** Piniella will turn the Mariners into winners, something no other manager has been able to do (though **Jim Lefebvre** eventually would have, had he been rehired last season). "I wouldn't be surprised if Lou has them in the race this year," says Cubs exec **Syd Thrift**.

Bruce Smith

The best thing about this NFL season is that there's no clear-cut favorite to win the Super Bowl. "There's probably five or six teams capable of winning it," says Chargers GM **Bobby Beathard**, "and it's been awhile since we've had such a wide-open field."

Dallas and San Francisco are the class of the NFC but could easily be knocked off by Philadelphia, Washington, Minnesota or even New Orleans.

"The Cowboys and 49ers have the best personnel, great coaching and overwhelming confidence," says an NFC general manager. "But remember, the Cowboys are still young, the 49ers don't have **[Joe] Montana**, the Redskins still have all those experienced veterans, and I don't care what problems [Eagles quarterback] **Randall Cunningham** has had, he's the type of talent who can get you through the playoffs."

The AFC has no dominant team (meaning the Super Bowl champ will once again be from the NFC). The Bills, AFC representatives in the Super Bowl the last two years, are so inconsistent, you don't know whether they're going to score 40 points or three. "Every team in this conference is inconsistent," says an AFC personnel director. "Buffalo is scary because of all that talent, but Kansas City and Miami are unquestionably as good." Pittsburgh has looked good as well, but is still one good draft away from being legitimate title threats. Houston? The Oilers are football's version of Sybil.

Aside from the **Dan Marino**-led Dolphins, the team everyone's scared of, especially when it comes down to the fourth quarter, is Denver, which has miracle man **John Elway**. "Don't ever underestimate big-game experience," says Raiders defensive end **Howie Long**. "And this is the year where that kind of experi-

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SPORT BEAT

ence can win an AFC championship."

Beathard, whose Chargers are a couple of impact offensive players away from contention in this day of NFL parity, says, "There isn't much that separates the top two or three teams from the next best two or three teams."

That wasn't the case last year. By midseason, it was evident that Washington was virtually unbeatable, and that when the Super Bowl rolled around, the Redskins would roll to victory, which they did. Virtually every team that's won the Super Bowl in the last decade or so has been dominant. But this year, for a refreshing change, the title's up for grabs.

Extra points: If the NFL hierarchy was smart, it would reinstate instant replay for next season's playoffs. We don't need instant replay during the regular season; it's chaotic and time- consuming. What the NFL has to do is perfect the system and use it when it counts most. We can't afford any mistakes come playoff time....If Randall Cunningham wants to be more successful, he has to stop rolling to his right every time he's flushed out of the pocket. "We've caught on [to the tendency]," says one NFC defensive back, "and it limits his options."....With their dominant defense, led by the great **Michael Dean Perry**, and one of the NFL's brightest young coaches in **Bill Belichick**, the Browns aren't far from title contention, particularly because the AFC is so weak. But they must improve their offensive line, which, among other things, could keep quarterback **Bernie Kosar** healthy....I applaud any coach who goes for it on fourth-and-short situations inside the opponent's 30-yard line, and I'm surprised more don't. After all, the effect its success has on the offensive line is huge. "The confidence and pride it gives you is overwhelming," says Bengals All-Pro offensive tackle **Anthony Munoz**, a future Hall of Famer. "It makes us [offensive linemen] feel like Supermen." The reason coaches don't go for it more often in those situations is simple: "It can have a devastating effect if you *don't* make it," says Rams coach **Chuck Knox**.

Sometime during the middle of this month, **Michael Jordan** will become the 18th player in NBA history to score 20,000 points. But put an asterisk next to Mike's name. He'll score the 20 grand quicker than 16 of the previous 17. Only **Wilt Chamberlain** accomplished the feat faster—499 games (which, amazingly, figures out to a 40-point scoring average). For Jordan, it'll take about 650 games. Wilt, **Oscar Robertson** (671 games) and **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar** (684) were the only others to score 20,000 points in less than 700 games. "I was surprised when I first heard about it, but I don't place a lot of emphasis on that," Jordan says. "I'm much more into rings."

Dribbling out the clock: The one thing that may prevent the Knicks from upsetting the Bulls and going to the Finals is the lack of a top point guard. If they had someone with half the talent of **Kevin Johnson**, **John Stockton** or **Tim Hardaway**, they'd be a shoo-in.★

POOH RICHARDSON

"IF YOU ASK ME WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MINNESOTA'S TEAM AND INDIANA'S TEAM, I'D SAY THE COMMITMENT TO WINNING."

BY THOMAS BONK

Pooh Richardson was a genuinely impressive sight as he walked into the Beverly Hills restaurant—so downright cool that he chilled the cucumbers in the salad bar as he strolled past. There was the ever-so-chic Armani floral print shirt, the collar just so, but it was not the clothes that made this man; it was the gold—so much of it that he might've sunk under the weight of any more.

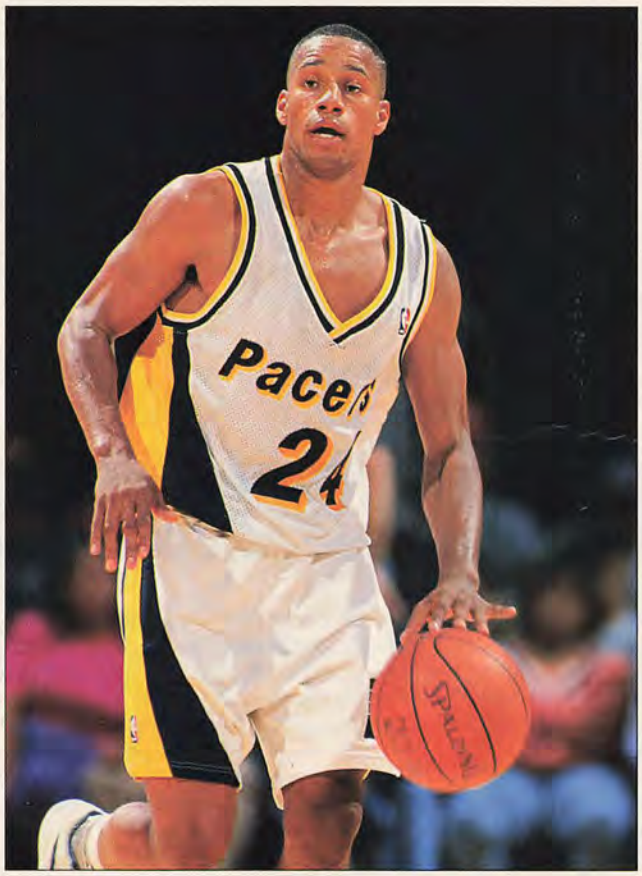
He blinded with glare the closer he got, and after the preliminaries I still couldn't take my eyes off the jewelry. He ran a gold- and diamond-laden finger down the face of the menu. On one wrist hung a diamond-studded Rolex; the other was adorned with a heavy gold ID bracelet, the name "POOH" spelled out in yet more diamonds.

This man looked so much like a star you'd never guess he'd been languishing in virtual obscurity up near Canada somewhere, a place with a lot of lakes and forests. The name of his former team says volumes—the *Timberwolves*.

While Minnesota is undeniably a beautiful state, it's downright lonely for a would-be celebrity athlete, a basketball player who flourished at UCLA under the glow of an attentive media.

The formalities over, the orders placed with the waiter, Richardson launches a discussion about the obscurity of playing in Minneapolis, a smaller, out-of-the-way city. Consider, says Richardson, a "guy like Kirby Puckett, arguably one of the best offensive players in baseball. How much do you really hear about Kirby? Same thing with my situation. [People] know he's a good player, and he's won. What else? He still doesn't get the recognition like Ryne Sandberg, Andre Dawson, guys like that, because they are in large markets."

BRIAN SPURLOCK



Richardson's probably the best point guard you've seldom heard of, thanks to his spending the first three years of his pro basketball career in what he feels was a virtual media void. That may now change due to the trade that sent him to the Indiana Pacers in exchange for Chuck Person. He's got a new start and a second chance at stardom.

"Getting traded," he says, "is like being drafted all over again. But you've got one advantage: You've been through it before."

He surely has been through it, this Jerome Richardson of Philadelphia, nicknamed by his grandmother, who took one look at the infant point-guard-to-be and was struck by his uncanny resemblance to the main character in the children's story, "Winnie the Pooh."

The name stuck, as did Pooh's love for basketball, although he had to move around some to satisfy it—from the legendary playgrounds of Philly to the legendary playground of UCLA's Pauley Pavilion to the, well, not-so-legendary playground of Minneapolis' Target Center.

The Timberwolves may not have been the franchise of anyone's dreams, but there were doubts during his junior season at UCLA about Richardson being drafted by anyone at all. "At one juncture," he says, "I was hearing maybe I wouldn't get drafted because I was too small."

His UCLA stats were impeccable—all-time team leader in assists and steals, eleventh in scoring, and top 10 in three-pointers and games. The 6-foot-1, 180-pound physique, however, was underwhelming in a game where 7-footers are not uncommon. In the NBA, point guards come in all shapes and sizes, but Magic Johnson's emergence into the league made height fashionable and changed the posi-

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tion's entrance requirements. For a while, all you had to do was stand flat-footed and graze your head on the bottom of the backboard to nail down a roster spot. But there's been a swing back in the other direction in recent years toward the not-very-tall-yet-strong types.

"I think it's just how big your heart is," Richardson says, "and all those guys have great heart—you know, [Tim] Hardaway, Kevin Johnson, [John] Stockton, Gary Payton."

The new breed, says Pooh, is characterized by aggression.

"It's an aggressive person's league," he says. "You may not score a lot, but you will be noted for steals on defense, for what you create for other players, for setting picks."

The job of the point guard might just be the most intriguing position on the floor. The shooting guards shoot, the centers block shots, rebound and score, the rebounding forwards rebound, the small forwards shoot and defend the best-shooting forward on the other team. And the point guard?

"You really don't want to shoot. You just want to keep feeding those guys. Makes your job a little easier," says Richardson. "You get a charge out of it when everybody else on the team is shooting the ball well and scoring and doing things."

> "I don't think those guys could withstand what I withstood at Minnesota."

In Minnesota, no one shot the ball well, so all of that was rather theoretical. With the Timberwolves, Richardson was sort of a sacrificial lamb. The first draft choice for the first-year Timberwolves, he was a steady rookie on a shaky team.

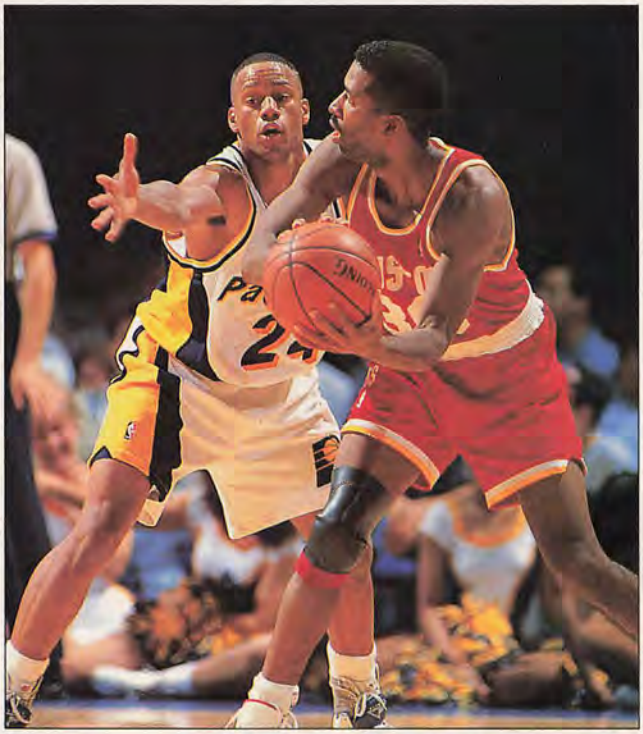
Richardson turned out to be the poor man's point guard. Stockton had Karl Malone to dish off to, Hardaway had Chris Mullin, and Kevin Johnson had Tom Chambers. Pooh had no one—not even the guy who drafted him, personnel director Billy McKinney, who was fired before long. Later, Coach Bill Musselman, with whom Richardson sometimes feuded, joined McKinney in the unemployment line.

Last year with the Timberwolves, Richardson was No. 7 in the NBA in assists, and his assist-to-turnover ratio of 3.36 was eighth best. Still, he constantly has had to justify his draft position—he went four spots ahead of Hardaway—while leading a bad team straight to nowhere. And while Stockton, Hardaway and KJ were piling up wins, Richardson piled up frustration.

"I try to do the best I can," he says. "But I don't think those guys could withstand what I withstood at Minnesota. I don't think Stockton would be the 12-, 13-assist guy playing for the Timberwolves. They had guys who were not utilized correctly. That's what happens with a young expansion team that did not affiliate itself early on with real basketball people in its front office."

That was the big problem with the Timberwolves, according to Richardson. They weren't—and aren't—run by basketball people.

"To get down to the bare facts in Minnesota," he says, "most of it is just financial. They just don't want to pay the players. They got to pay Christian [Laettner], but for the people who put the work out for that team and gave the team the name it does have, they don't want to do anything about that.



BRIAN SPURLOCK

"Now that I'm in Indiana, when you go to a new organization and find out how classy it is compared to another, how one organization reeks of basketball direction, basketball executives, and the other one has none—one, two basketball people at the most—it's [easy] to understand. If you ask me what's the difference between Minnesota's team and Indiana's team, I'd say the commitment to winning."

So Richardson's road show continues. And finally it seems to be going somewhere. He's still not quite posing for the camera, but if things work out as well as he hopes, that might come. The best way for him to become a household name would be to play on a team that wins something besides the race for the first team to be mathematically eliminated from the playoffs.

After all, Richardson is undeniably an asset at point guard. He can pass, he can run the floor, he can run the offense, and he can shoot, even though he wasn't so sure of his shot early on in his career at UCLA, where Reggie Miller was *the* outside weapon.

In Indiana, Richardson continues his quest to be somebody, well, big. Not in inches, but in rings, championship ones. But he'll settle for less—like, how about a winning season?

For the first time in years, he'll get to feel like something more than a talented loser. Pooh Richardson will once more be able to be the playmaking point guard without feeling like a chump.

"When you have a good team, a lot of times they look for direction and strength from the person who controls the ball the majority of the time," he says. "For a point guard, that's pretty nice, but only if you don't mind sacrificing your game to help other players."

Richardson doesn't at all mind sacrificing his game—just as long as his team wins *the* game.★

Thomas Bonk is a sports reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*.

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David Sanborn: Upfront (Elektra) **11104**

Patty Smyth (MCA) **25090**

Marty Stuart: Once Upon A Time (CMH Records) **10563**

Linda Ronstadt: Frenesi (Elektra) **24810**

House Of Pain (Tommy Boy) **25416**

Arc Angels (Geffen) **25385**

Best Of The Grateful Dead: Skeletons From The Closet (Warner Bros.) **83892**

Sting: The Soul Cages (A&M) **25218**

Brooks & Dunn: Brand New Man (Arista) **64331**

Carreras, Domingo, Pavarotti: 3 Tenors (London) **35078**

Lindsey Buckingham: Out Of The Cradle (Reprise) **20483**

Eagles: Greatest Hits 1971-1975 (Asylum) **23481**

Natalie Cole: Unforgettable (Elektra) **83452**

Michael Penn: Free-For-All (RCA) **20668**

En Vogue: Funky Divas (East West) **61717**

Mo' Money/Sdtrk. (A&M) **71593**

R.E.M.: Eponymous (I.R.S./MCA) **00701**

Rod Stewart: Downtown Train (Warner Bros.) **10708**

Anne Murray: Fifteen Of The Best (Liberty) **64657**

Supertramp: Breakfast In America (A&M) **25246**

Wynonna Judd: Wynonna (MCA/Curb) **64540**

The Cure: Wish (Elektra/ Fiction) **11116**

Mr. Big: Lean Into It (Atlantic) **24821**

Eric Clapton: Rush-Music From The Motion Picture Soundtrack (Reprise) **05632**

The Very Best Of The Righteous Brothers: Unchained Melody (Verve) **44658**

The B-52's: Good Stuff (Reprise) **53851**

Richard Marx: Rush Street (Capitol) **15574**

Kiss: Revenge (Mercury) **25279**

Frank Sinatra: Sinatra Reprise/The Very Good Years (Reprise) **80304**

Fleetwood Mac: Greatest Hits (Warner Bros.) **00796**

Jackson Browne: Running On Empty (Elektra) **11056**

Paul Simon: Negotiations And Love Songs 1971-86 (Warner Bros.) **20461**

The Best Of The Doobie Brothers (Warner Bros.) **43738**

U2: Achtung Baby (Island) **25174**

Clint Black: The Hard Way (RCA) **35458**

Wayne's World-Music From The Motion Picture (Reprise) **63551**

DAS EFX : Dead Serious (Atco/EastWest) **25328**

John Cougar Mellencamp:Scarecrow (Riva) **44512**

Bonnie Raitt: Nick Of Time (Capitol) **54410**

Buffalo Springfield: Retrospective (ATCO) **00844**

Paul Overstreet: Love Is Strong (RCA) **10745**

The Very Best Of Thin Lizzy: Dedication (Mercury) **34826**

Trisha Yearwood: Hearts In Armor (MCA) **21048**

Michael W. Smith: Change Your World (Geffen) **20936**

Bruce Hornsby And The Range: The Way It Is (RCA) **63918**

Robert Palmer: Addictions, Vol. 2 (Island) **25277**

Pat Metheny: Secret Story (Geffen) **82267**

John Mellencamp: Whenever We Wanted (Mercury) **74582**

U2: Rattle And Hum (Island) **00596**

Extreme: Pornograffitti (A&M) **43557**

Soundgarden: Badmotorfinger (A&M) **05637**

Enya: Shepherd Moons (Reprise) **53190**

The Police: Every Breath You Take—The Singles (A&M) **73924**

Elton John: The One (MCA) **35022**

Bell Biv DeVoe: Poison (MCA) **00547**

Hammer: Too Legit To Quit (Capitol) **25514**

Van Halen: For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge (Warner Bros.) **10016**

Peter Frampton: Classics (13 Greatest Hits) (A&M) **04894**

The Judds: Greatest Hits, Vol. 2 (RCA) **74054**

Derek & The Dominos: Layla And Other Assorted Love Songs (Polydor) **25249**

Van Morrison: Moondance (Warner Bros.) **64585**

Hank Williams, Jr.: Maverick (Curb/Capricorn) **05647**

The Very Best Of The Boston Pops (Philips) **15319**

Amy Grant: Heart In Motion (A&M) **25182**

R.E.M.: Out Of Time (Warner Bros.) **24762**

Jimi Hendrix: Radio One (Rykodisc) **63620**

The Beach Boys: Pet Sounds (Capitol) **00513**

Marc Cohn (Atlantic) **82983**

Best Of Bad Company: 10 From 6 (Atlantic) **60321**

Tears For Fears: Tears Roll Down (The Hits 1982-1992) (Fontana) **80162**

Steppenwolf: 16 Greatest Hits (MCA) **13453**

Jimi Hendrix Experience: Live At Winterland (Rykodisc) **63650**

Guns N' Roses : Use Your Illusion I (Geffen) 35469 †
Use Your Illusion II (Geffen) 25534 †
Eric Clapton: Unplugged (Warner Bros.) 23690
INXS: Welcome To Wherever You Are (Atlantic) 11070
Travis Tritt: t-r-o-u-b-l-e (Warner Bros.) 44828

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ZZ Top: Greatest Hits (Warner Bros.) 83411
Red Hot Chili Peppers: Blood Sugar Sex Magik (Warner Bros.) 11127 †
Boomerang/ Sdtrk. (LaFace) 53395
Megadeth: Countdown To Extinction (Capitol) 63340

The Baddest Of George Thorogood And The Destroyers (EMI) **84002**

Billy Idol: Vital Idol (Chrysalis) **54038**

Stand By Me/Sdtrk. (Atlantic) **34401**

Eric Clapton: Timepieces (Polydor) **23385**

Jethro Tull: Original Masters (Chrysalis) **63846**

Mötley Crüe: Decade Of Decadence (Elektra) **40298**

Heart: Rock The House "Live"! (Capitol) **05603**

Vince Gill: I Still Believe In You (MCA) **21063**

Scorpions: Best Of Rockers 'N' Ballads (Mercury) **63492**

Black Sabbath: Paranoid (Warner Bros.) **04222**

Kiss: Double Platinum (Casablanca) **25149**

Pat Benatar: Best Shots (Chrysalis) **44319**

Primus: Sailing The Seas Of Cheese (Interscope) **64171**

Pantera: Vulgar Display Of Power (ATCO) **80040 †**

George Strait: Pure Country (MCA) **83064**

White Lion: Greatest Hits (Atlantic) **93654**

Blues Brothers : Compilation (Atlantic) **43711**

Bad Company: Here Comes Trouble (Atco) **83733**

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Neil Young: Ragged Glory (Reprise) **34621**

Paula Abdul: Spellbound (Virgin) **73320**

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The Best Of .38 Special/Flashback (A&M) **42864**

Eagles: Greatest Hits, Vol. 2 (Asylum) **63318**

Tanya Tucker: What Do I Do With Me (Liberty) **25536**

Tom Petty: Full Moon Fever (MCA) **33911**

Michelle Shocked: Arkansas Traveler (Mercury) **10521**

Tyler Collins: Tyler (RCA) **80152**

The Oak Ridge Boys: The Long Haul (RCA) **10924**

D.J. Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince: Homebase (Jive) **21073**

Charlatans U.K.: Between 10th & 11th (RCA) **44622**

Horowitz: The Poet (DG) **25258**

Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation 1814 (A&M) **72386**

Spinal Tap/Sdtrk. (Polydor) **34691**

Guys And Dolls/ New Broadway Cast (RCA Victor) **61964**

Damn Yankees (Warner Bros.) **14852**

Jon Bon Jovi: Blaze Of Glory (Mercury) **44490**

Bob Marley: Legend (Island) **53521**

Suzy Bogguss: Aces (Liberty) **05631**

Prince: Diamonds & Pearls (WB/Paisley Park) **63372**

Garth Brooks: Ropin' The Wind (Liberty) **25535**

Deep Purple: Machine Head (Warner Bros.) **13813**

Diamond Rio (Arista) **10702**

Conway Twitty: #1's/ The Warner Bros. Years (Warner Bros.) **00522**

Little Village (Reprise) **05636**

Jefferson Starship: Gold (RCA) **64132**

Best Of Dire Straits: Money For Nothing (Warner Bros.) **00713**

Heart: Dreamboat Annie (Capitol) **64175**

Damn Yankees: Don't Tread (Warner Bros.) **53663**

Sammy Kershaw: Don't Go Near The Water (Mercury) **25140**

Anthrax: Attack Of The Killer B's (Megaforce/Island) **25154 †**

ZZ Top: Afterburner (Warner Bros.) **64042**

Robert Cray: I Was Warned (Mercury) **82335**

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1982 CHARGERS VS. DOLPHINS

A DIVISIONAL PLAYOFF GAME FOR THE AGES

BY WILLIAM LADSON

After the San Diego Chargers had scorched the Miami Dolphins for 24 unanswered first-quarter points in a 1982 AFC divisional playoff game at the Orange Bowl in Miami, few had this one pegged as a classic.

But was it ever.

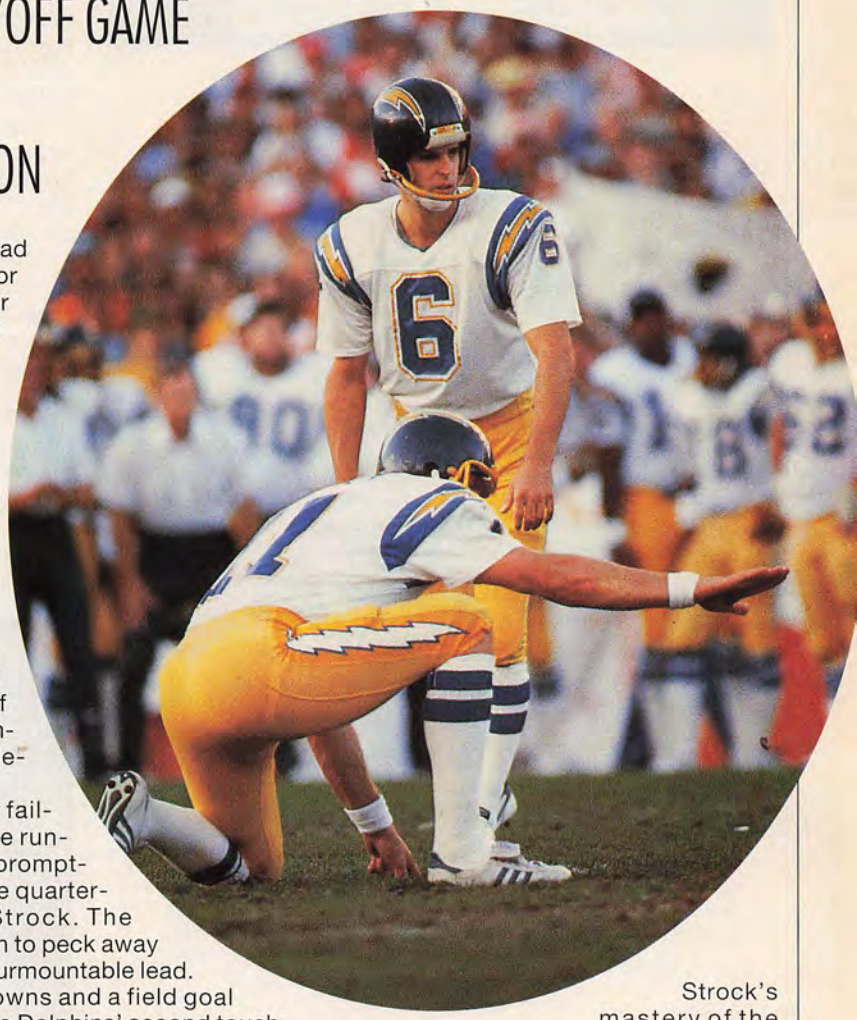
When the dust had settled, the Chargers had eked out a 41-38 overtime win in a game that rewrote the record books: For the first time ever, two quarterbacks in the same game—Dan Fouts and Don Strock—had thrown for more than 400 yards; five players had more than 100 yards' worth of receptions; and the teams combined for 1,036 yards, a single-game record.

The Dolphins first-quarter failures—they trailed 24-0 before running their seventh play—had prompted coach Don Shula to replace quarterback David Woodley with Strock. The switch worked, as Miami began to peck away at the Chargers' seemingly insurmountable lead. Two second-quarter touchdowns and a field goal narrowed the gap to 24-17. The Dolphins' second touchdown came on a 40-yard hook-and-lateral as time ran out in the half. Strock hit Duriel Harris, who lateraled to Tony Nathan for the score. That play, according to Strock, had the Dolphins believing they could advance to the AFC championship game.

"I thought we could win the game because the Chargers had a terrible defense," Strock says today. "That's why it was so easy to score on the [hook-and-lateral]."

The Chargers' defense was indeed dismal, having given up the most points—390—during the 1981 regular season. But San Diego linebacker Jim Laslavic says their defense self-destructed in the second quarter because of 85-degree heat and because it underestimated Strock's abilities.

"During halftime, most of us couldn't stand up because we were suffering from heat exhaustion," says Laslavic. "And, we were not prepared to play against Don Strock. All week long, we thought about how we were going to stop David Woodley. When Strock entered the game, it was like we didn't have a clue."



AL MESSERSCHMIDT

Kicker Rolf Benirschke kicked the game-winning field goal in overtime that advanced the Chargers to the AFC championship game.

Strock's mastery of the Chargers' defense continued in the second half, but the Dolphins, leading 38-31 with a chance to salt the game away late in the fourth quarter, let an opportunity slip away when rookie fullback Andra Franklin fumbled at the San Diego 20-yard line. The Chargers recovered it and tied the score when Fouts hit James Brooks on a 9-yard touchdown pass with just 58 seconds showing on the clock.

"[Franklin's] fumble hurt us," says Strock. "If we had scored on that drive, we would have won the game in regulation."

The Dolphins still had a chance to win the game in regulation, but Uwe von Schamann's 43-yard field goal attempt was blocked by Chargers tight end Kellen Winslow, sending the game into overtime.

The blocked field goal was a harbinger of kicking failures to come.

1982 CHARGERS VS. DOLPHINS ★

FINAL TEAM STATISTICS

ORANGE BOWL, MIAMI, FLORIDA
SATURDAY, JANUARY 2, 1982

SCORE BY PERIODS

San Diego	24	0	7	7	3 (OT) – 41
Miami	0	17	14	7	0 (OT) – 38

SCORING

San Diego	Field goal Benirschke 32
San Diego	Chandler 56 punt return (Benirschke kick)
San Diego	Muncie 1 run (Benirschke kick)
San Diego	Brooks 8 pass from Fouts (Benirschke kick)
Miami	Field goal von Schamann 34
Miami	Rose 1 pass from Strock (von Schamann kick)
Miami	Nathan 40 pass from Strock (von Schamann kick)
Miami	Rose 15 pass from Strock (von Schamann kick)
San Diego	Winslow 25 pass from Fouts (Benirschke kick)
Miami	Hardy 50 pass from Strock (von Schamann kick)
Miami	Nathan 12 run (von Schamann kick)
San Diego	Brooks 9 pass from Fouts (Benirschke kick)
San Diego	Field goal Benirschke 29

TEAM STATISTICS

	San Diego	Miami
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS	34	25
By Rushing	10	3
By Passing	21	21
By Penalty	3	1
Third-down Efficiency	8-15	8-16
TOTAL NET YARDS	564	472
Total Offensive Plays	85	79
Average Gain Per Play	6.6	6.0
NET YARDS RUSHING	149	78
Total Rushing Plays	29	28
Avg. Gain Per Rush	5.1	2.8
NET YARDS PASSING	415	394
Yards Lost Attempting to Pass	2-18	3-29
Gross Yards Passing	433	423
PASSES	33-54-1	31-48-2
Avg. Gain Per Pass	7.4	7.8
PUNTS	4-40.3	5-42.0
Had Blocked	0	0
TOTAL RET. YARDS	189	140
Punt Returns	64	12
Kickoff Returns	100	98
Interception Returns	35	30
PENALTIES/YARDS	9-55	7-50
FUMBLES/LOST	3-3	2-1
TIME OF POSSESSION	28:06	31:54
Overtime	9:38	4:14

Attendance—73,735

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing—San Diego: Muncie 24-120, Brooks 3-19, Fouts 2-10; Miami: Nathan 14-48, Franklin 9-6, Woodley 1-10, Hill 3-8, Vigorito 1-6.
Passing—San Diego: Fouts 33-53-1—433, Muncie 0-1-0—0; Miami: Woodley 2-5-1—20, Strock 29-43-1—403.
Receiving—San Diego: Muncie 2-5, Chandler 6-106, Winslow 13-166, Joiner 7-108, Brooks 4-31. Scales 1-17; Miami: Rose 4-37, Harris 6-106, Nathan 9-114, Cefalo 3-62, Hill 2-3, Hardy 5-89, Vigorito 2-12.
Kickoff Returns—San Diego: Brooks 5-85, Beaudoin 1-15; Miami: Walker 1-18, Vigorito 4-67, Hill 1-13.
Punt Returns—San Diego: Chandler 1-56, Brooks 1-8; Miami: Vigorito 1-12.
Interceptions—San Diego: Edwards 1-35, Buchanon 1-0; Miami: L. Blackwood 1-8, Small 0-22.
Punting—San Diego: Robert 4-40.3; Miami: Orosz 5-42.0.
Field Goals—San Diego: Benirschke 2-4; Miami: von Schamann 1-3.
Fumbles—San Diego: Fouts, Buchanon, Muncie; Miami: Woodley Franklin.
Fumble Recoveries—San Diego: Shaw; Miami: Laakso, Baumhower, Vigorito, Betters.

San Diego failed to capitalize on its first scoring opportunity in overtime when kicker Rolf Benirschke, as steady in the clutch as they came, pulled a 27-yarder wide to the left.

Von Schamann, given a chance to redeem himself for his missed opportunity in regulation, slipped and fell to the ground on his next attempt, four minutes after Benirschke's mishap.

But then it was Benirschke's turn for redemption, and he took advantage of his second chance, splitting the uprights for the win.

The Chargers, though, were not a team of destiny that season. With no help from their defense, they succumbed to the Cincinnati Bengals in the AFC championship game, 27-7.

"I was never in the Super Bowl," says Laslavic, "but I'm thankful that I was in one of the greatest games ever played."★

AL MESSERSCHMIDT

Charlie Joyner (left) was one of five players with more than 100 yards' worth of receptions.

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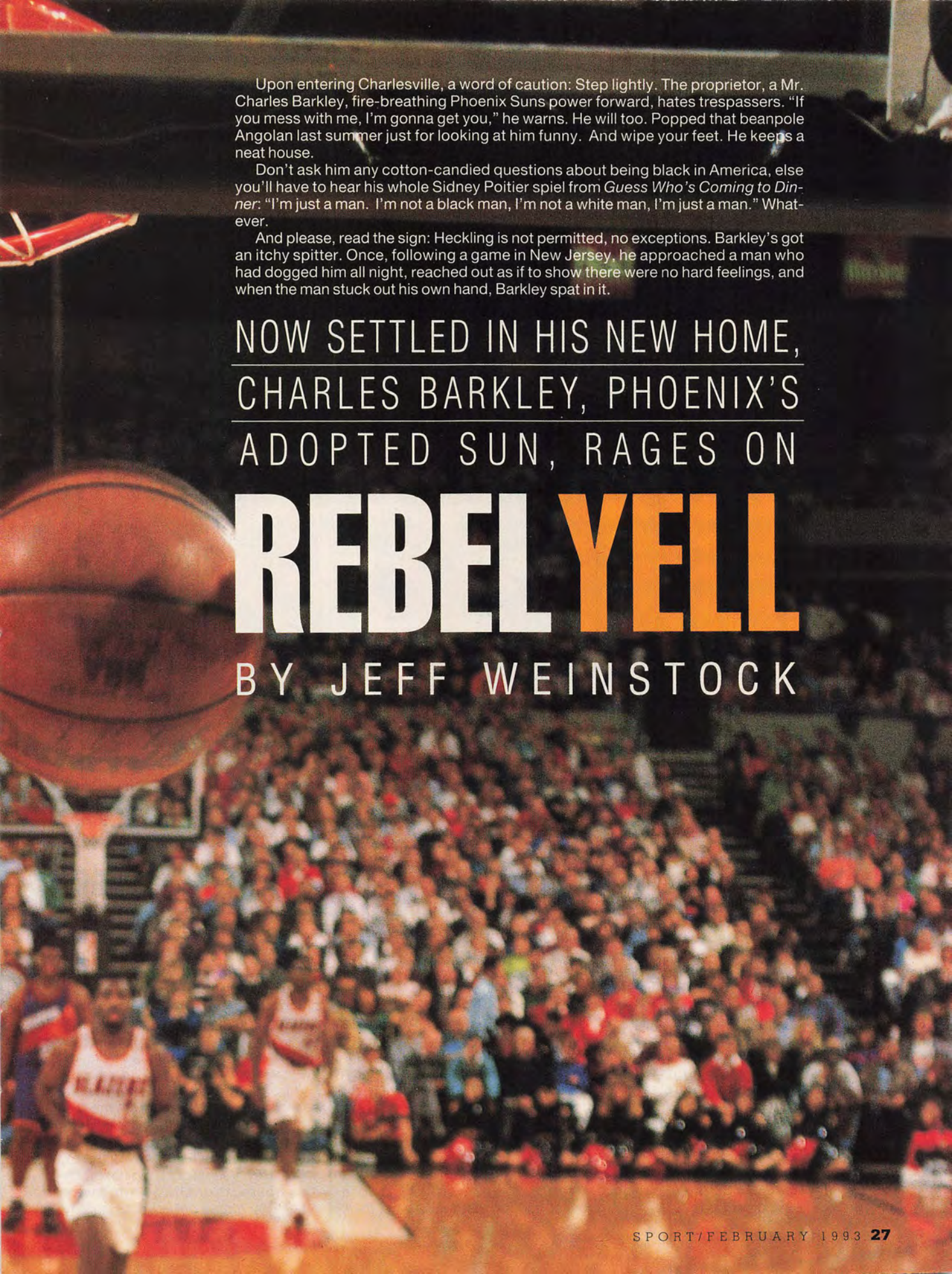


Upon entering Charlesville, a word of caution: Step lightly. The proprietor, a Mr. Charles Barkley, fire-breathing Phoenix Suns power forward, hates trespassers. "If you mess with me, I'm gonna get you," he warns. He will too. Popped that beanpole Angolan last summer just for looking at him funny. And wipe your feet. He keeps a neat house.

Don't ask him any cotton-candied questions about being black in America, else you'll have to hear his whole Sidney Poitier spiel from *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*: "I'm just a man. I'm not a black man, I'm not a white man, I'm just a man." Whatever.

And please, read the sign: Heckling is not permitted, no exceptions. Barkley's got an itchy spitter. Once, following a game in New Jersey, he approached a man who had dogged him all night, reached out as if to show there were no hard feelings, and when the man stuck out his own hand, Barkley spat in it.

NOW SETTLED IN HIS NEW HOME, CHARLES BARKLEY, PHOENIX'S ADOPTED SUN, RAGES ON

REBEL YELL

BY JEFF WEINSTOCK

A couple of seasons ago, in the infamous Night of the Wayward Loogie, responding to a spectator's string of obscenities, Barkley spat in anger. Regrettably, he soaked an 8-year-old girl. His image took a severe hit. Oh, just one last thing. Charles Wade Barkley would like you to know that he doesn't give a plug nickel about image.

"What is image?" he says. "Image has nothing to do with life. Image don't mean anything to me. What is image?"

See, this is what we do with Barkley. One act of mayhem is countered by one act of kindness. It has become something of a game to try to figure out which side of Creation has control over his soul. And for all of his ravings about the rough treatment he gets from the press, it is Barkley's every intention to keep people guessing. He steals a moment to whisper, "Don't let 'em know I'm a nice guy."

that was bad enough to hurt a guy's feelings. If it offended him, sorry to hear that."

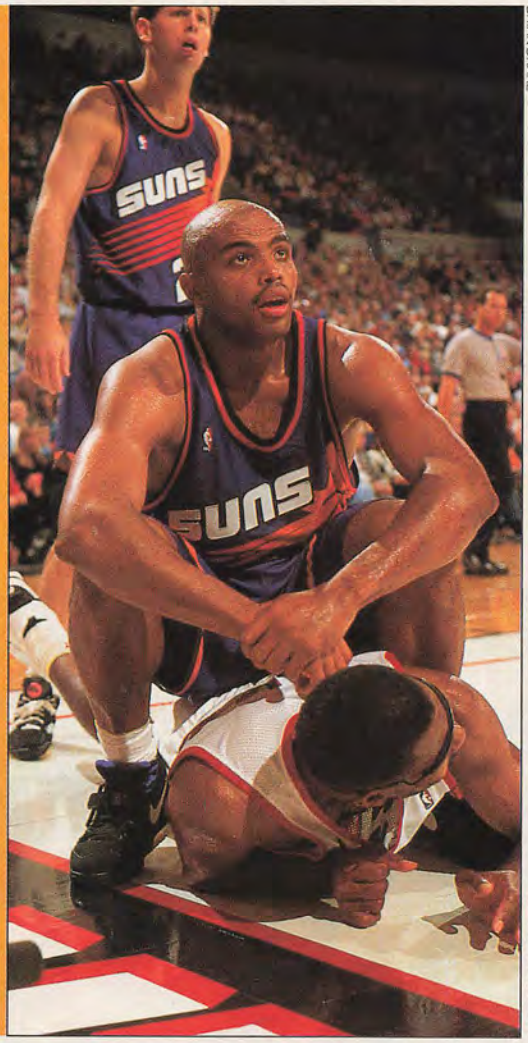
You'll speak your mind regardless if it insults your teammates?

"Why should I have to lie to people?"

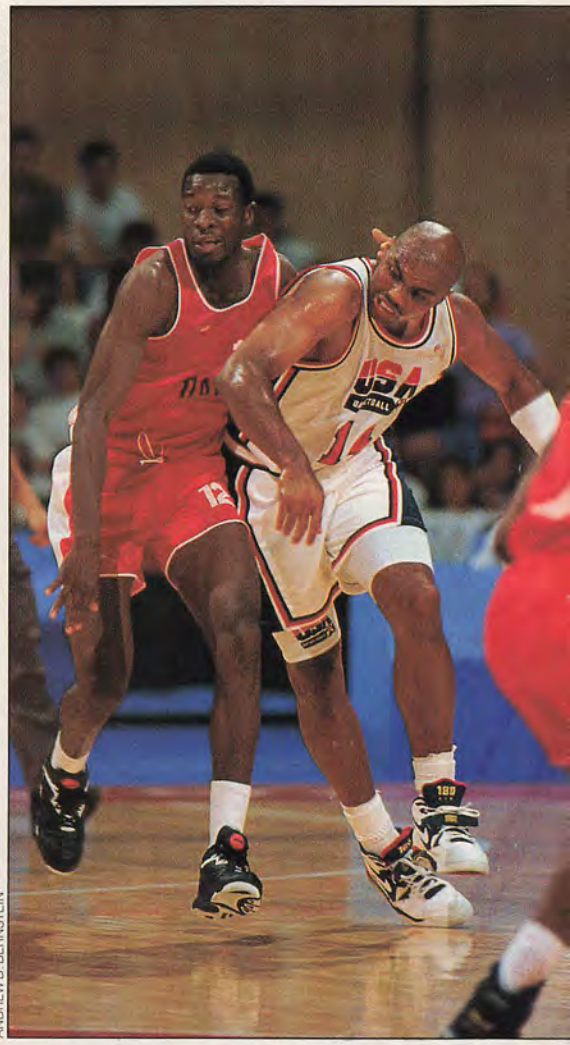
You called [76ers director of player personnel] Gene Shue a caddie.

"He is a caddie. He deserves that. He said some things about me. An eye for an eye."

Barkley isn't one for sitting down on the job, despite this recent incident with Buck Williams. More often, he's seen throwing elbows, such as the one directed at an Angolan player in the Olympics.



BRIAN DRAKE



ANDREW D. BERNSTEIN

But Sir Charles, knighted, it seems, by popular demand, has a sunny side, too, enough to warm a tribe of Ididerod dog-sled racers. With his public, a finer fellow you will not meet, charming, civil, inexhaustibly gracious. Indeed, you cannot come to a full accounting of Charles Barkley until you have watched him work a room. In one two-hour lunch break, he received a steady stream of autograph seekers, handshakes, offers of sex (actually, there was just that one) and photo requests. In return, he accommodated every appeal, except for that sex one, and left all his well-wishers in brighter spirits than when they approached.

"I didn't say anything bad in my book [his autobiography, Outrageous*]."*

You ripped players.

"Who did I rip?"

Armon Gilliam. You called him Mr. Macho Rebounder.

"No I didn't. Get the book. I guarantee you I didn't say that. I said he's a good scorer, he just doesn't want to rebound, which is just a fact."

Then you said he turned out not to be much of a scorer.

"No, no, now, that was one of the misquotes of the book. They just wrote the words wrong. I said he's just not a good rebounder, that's it....I don't think

In conversation, Barkley says often, "Ask me a question, and I'll tell you the truth," brandishing the statement as if it were a sword. And if he feels pinched, he'll stick you with it. As his aggravation grew in his final two seasons in Philadelphia, Barkley called the owner cheap, his teammates stiffs and the city racist.

The thing about Barkley is, he doesn't run his words through the customary filters. In that way, he is childlike in his truth-telling. Barkley is the boy who says to the man with the big nose, "Hey, you've got a big nose," before his mother shoos him away. Where we pause or hedge or qualify,

Barkley acts. Barkley speaks. No thought is reviewed or purified before it is sicked on the world. There are no speed bumps. He barrels from moment to moment, reverses, contradicts, denies, contradicts the denial, denies the contradiction, contradicts the contradiction and denies the denial.

But one can't help but love him for it, because there is something terribly appealing about someone brazen enough to, as Barkley did last year, deny having read or written parts of his own autobiography, although he did stop short of denying having lived them. Or maybe it's that round face, shaped as it is like a grin, which assures you that he means no malice. And at least in his own mind, everything adds up. "When I sit down to pray at night," Barkley says, "I say, 'God, I hope it's worth it, telling the truth all the time.'"

The Angolan incident.

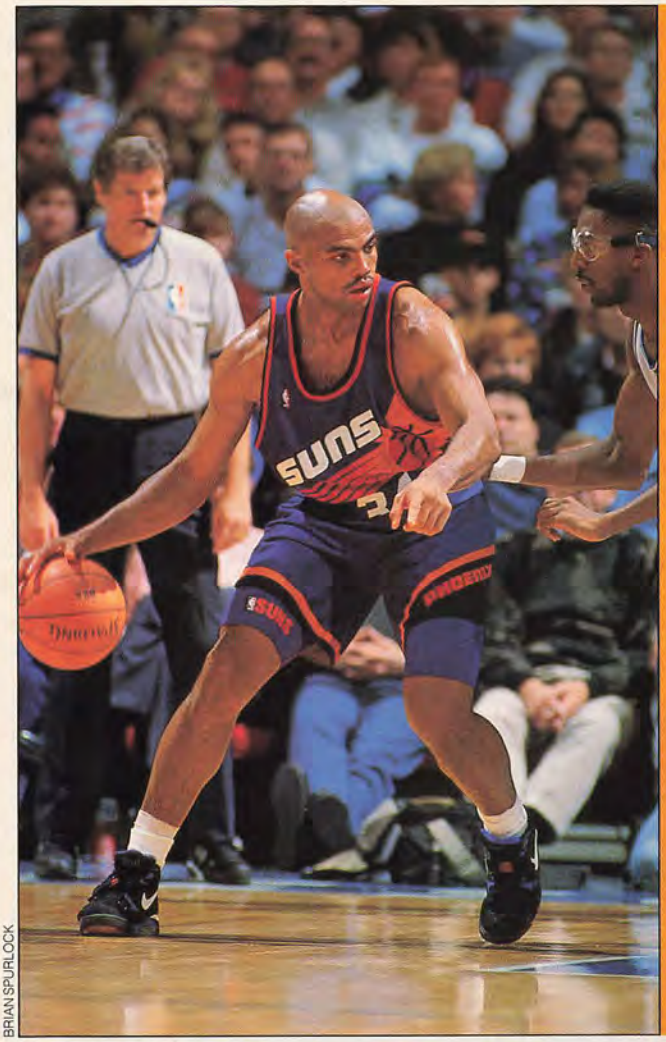
"Anybody I play against is gonna get hit."

Your teammates didn't back you up.

"That's another misconception from the media. They pulled me aside and said, 'We don't need you getting thrown out of the game. We need you for this team to win.'"

David Robinson and Michael Jordan both said that your behavior reflected badly on the rest of the team.

"Well, I can't expect all those guys to stick by me. You've got some sell-outs in the group....If I hit a guy like that in the NBA, they would call it intimidating. But because they were trying to make money out of the Olympics, a couple of the brothers wanted to sell me out. I can understand that."



BRIAN SPURLOCK

So it seems we now look on Barkley. Crazy Uncle Charles, howling off in the corner about something or other.... In Barkley's eyes...better Uncle Charles than Uncle Tom.

No one has ever quite wanted to deal with Barkley's excesses. The league hits him with fines, which Barkley pays off with as much pause as he does the cable bill. "They say that how you break into this league is how you will be your entire career," says Utah Jazz president Frank Layden. "I think when [Barkley] was a young player coming out of college, he had an awful lot of leeway and has never changed. If anything, he has expanded."

In Phoenix, the "incidents," the occasional fighting, spitting, after-hours dust-up, are seen as part of the package. "We take the total package," says his new boss, Suns president Jerry Colangelo, which is a coded way of saying, we'll put up with his eruptions as long as he delivers 25 points and 12 boards a night. Says his new teammate Danny Ainge: "I think a lot of people misinterpret his antics and his quotes. They read too much into them. I think Charles is just having fun."

Fine, but the problem in taking Barkley as entertainment is that he does have serious things to say. On these things, he is consistent. He continues to insist that some fringe white players make NBA rosters because management understands that an all-black team would offend segments of the league's audience. "I wouldn't expect Phoenix to have an all-black team," he says, echoing what he said of Philadelphia last year. "You just gotta accept what kind of country we live in. It's a racist country, and that's just the way it is."

He has a curious love/hate relationship with the media. We love him, he hates us. It's the devil media, Barkley says, who regard any opinionated black man as a renegade. According to Barkley, the press creates an athlete's public image by identifying him either as a "good guy" or a "bad guy" and then portraying him in that light.

"The black athletes know this," he says, "and they feed on it, trying to keep their image straight."

But the price of being Sir Charles, the personality, is that what you say is less important than the fact that it's you saying it. There was a poet who, comparing his own voice to that of a hawk, wrote, "I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable/I sound my barbaric yawp over the rooftops of the world." So it seems we now look on Barkley. Crazy Uncle Charles, howling off in the corner about something or other. Which, in Barkley's eyes, wouldn't be the worst way to view him. Better Uncle Charles than Uncle Tom.

"Don't give me that crap about leadership. You got good players, you're gonna win. Was Michael Jordan a bad leader when Chicago wasn't winning?"

But—

"There's no but. Michael Jordan is great. And he couldn't win a championship until he got better players around him. So was he a bad leader in the beginning? No. Thank you."

Well—

"When he criticized [Chicago Bulls general manager] Jerry Krause [a few years ago], was he a bad leader? No.

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– Certified by SCORE International, January 1992

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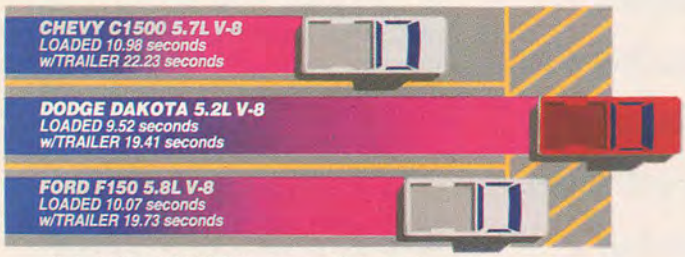

Dodge Dakota 4x2 Club Cab out-paces full-size regular cab pickups 0-60, with 1,150 lbs payload and with 6,040 lbs combined payload and trailer weight.[1]

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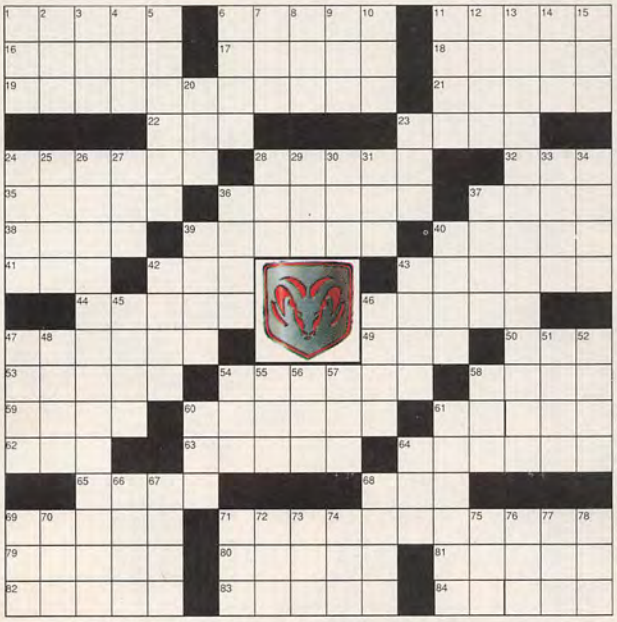
[1]Dakota 4x2 Club Cab out-ran Ford & Chevy compact extended cabs 0-60, empty, w/960 lbs payload & w/5,850 lbs combined payload & trailer weight. All trucks equipped with auto. trans. & max. avail. axle ratios. Graph not proportional to test data. [2]Overall total combined model scores. All claims & comparisons based on '92 models/data.

The Dodge SPORTword Puzzle

By Stanley Newman

"25 YEARS AGO IN SPORTS"



See page 74 for an exciting SPORTword puzzle contest and rules to win a prize. (January puzzle answers on page 73.)

Across

1. Biondi and Guokas
6. Well-executed
11. Up ___ (facing the pitcher): 2 wds.
16. Take ___ (sit down): 2 wds.
17. Conscious
18. Alpha's opposite
19. PGA champ in '68: 2 wds.
21. '60s pitcher Cisco
22. Unser Jr. and Sr.
23. ___ up (prepare to exercise)
24. First jockey to win the Triple Crown twice
28. "THE NEW: ___ "
32. Line judge's call
35. Pacific ___ League
36. ABA champs in '68
37. Number of times Killebrew played in World Series
38. ___ spumante wine
39. Health-spa client
40. Championship
41. Penalty-caller
42. Hogan or Crenshaw
43. Shampoo additive
44. "___ My Heart in San Francisco": 2 wds.
46. Reliance
47. Derby-winning jockey in '68
49. ___ trick (hockey coup)
50. Namath's college: Abbr.
53. Not ___ (mediocre): 2 wds.
54. Long-jump gold medalist in '68
58. Kind of milk
59. Gymnasts and jockeys: Abbr.
60. He won his fourth discus gold medal in '68
61. "If you don't like it, tough!": 2 wds.
62. The Seminoles: Abbr.
63. Tennis pro Krickstein
64. He struck out 16 in a '68 World Series game
65. Pirate or Padre
68. Marathoner Allison
69. Fine fabric
71. He flopped at the '68 Olympics: 2 wds.
79. ___ a Buck ('85 Derby winner)
80. Steer clear of
81. One-on-one teacher
82. Start of a toast
83. Track-and-field contests
84. Encourages in crime

Down

1. Ralph Houk's WWII rank: Abbr.
2. Pac-10 team: Abbr.
3. ___ Aviv
4. Randy's skating partner
5. "Dr. Strangeglove"
6. Captures
7. "Sands of ___ Jima"
8. A ways away
9. Ring result
10. Marv Albert's exclamation
11. Frat-party wear
12. Actor Sharif
13. Race run for the 100th time in '68: 2 wds.
14. 18 is the minimum one for an NHL player
15. Beachgoer's goal
20. Gin fizz
23. Mr. Unseld
24. Rent- ___ (airport-based service): 2 wds.
25. NL batting champion in '68
26. He pitched a perfect game in '68: 2 wds.
27. "___ was saying...": 2 wds.
28. Be stranded on base
29. Make a choice
30. '50s outfielder Fondy
31. Dog's warning
33. NCAA champ in '68: Abbr.
34. Be abundant
36. Cream purchase
37. Maintains the bowling lanes
39. Resist boldly
40. Not slack
42. Versatile Campaneris
43. Fiber-rich food
45. Durocher and Cardenas
46. Explorer Heyerdahl
47. Fighter pilots' organization, perhaps
48. Drunkards
51. Superstar's transportation, perhaps: Abbr.
52. Prayer ending
54. Comedienne Arthur
55. Bobble the ball
56. From ___ Z: 2 wds.
57. Most hockey fans
58. Pinch hitter, for instance
60. Boathouse gear
61. Nap, south of the border
64. Sticky stuff
66. Morning ___ (betting odds)
67. They rush the quarterback
68. Farm-region mail zones: Abbr.
69. "Be quiet!"
70. Big galoot
71. River barrier
72. "___ Gotta Be Me"
73. Steve Ovett's rival
74. First-aid box
75. Mac
76. Salt Lake City collegian
77. Deteriorate
78. Months and months: Abbr.

Let's see: Gas charged struts. Quick ratio rack-and-pinion steering. Rear spoiler. A great stereo. And a surprise option under the hood. A hot 3.0L multi-point V-6. Sounds like another wild ride from Dodge.

SHADOW ES THE NEW DODGE

A DIVISION OF THE CHRYSLER CORPORATION

SPORT
MAGAZINE

When he said he needed some help, was he a bad leader? No. But Michael Jordan's a good guy by the press, he can say that stuff. Charles Barkley's outspoken, he's not gonna kiss the media's butt, so they're gonna get on him if something happens. OK. See, I know my stuff. They can't fool me. I know them guys. They're just a bunch of jealous nitwits, the media. They're jealous because you've got a good job, they have to follow you around and be at your beck and call, and you make a lot of money. And if you don't kiss up to them, they don't like that.

"Michael's one of my best friends, but if he said some things that I said, it wouldn't be a big deal, because he's a good guy. Like if he said people would be offended by an all-black team, everybody would agree with that. I know he won't say that."

Once, when he was 8, a young Charles Barkley, convinced that he could fly, strapped on a Superman cape and leaped off the roof of the housing project in which he lived. When he awoke from the resulting concussion, he had learned otherwise. "I now know I can't fly," he says.

It's the only concession to limits Barkley will give. As he charts an earthbound passage to his first NBA title, one can expect him to continue to sound his barbaric yawp over the rooftops of the world, not a bit tamed, nor always translatable.

Do you worry that some people think of you as a loudmouth instead of a great basketball player?

"Man, let me tell you something. When I quit playing basketball, I hope my teams won a lot of games and I hope I did the best I could."

But—

"Don't say but, 'cause when you say but, you're trying to cover something up. I do the best I can. If somebody thinks I'm not that good a player, so be it. They're entitled to their opinions, but I'm not living by their expectations."

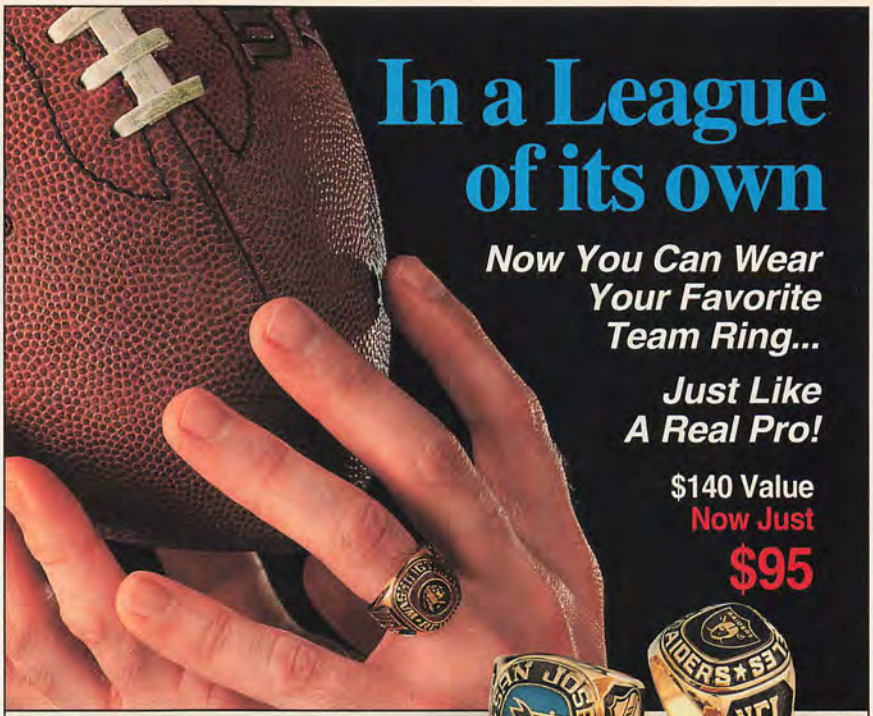
Do you want to be remembered a certain way?

"Hey, listen, nobody remembers you when you're gone, don't kid yourself. Don't kid yourself."

You don't worry about your legacy?

"Legacy? My legacy is that I did a helluva job as long as I was around."★

BRIAN SPURLOCK



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THE ROAD TO SUPER SUNDAY

HOT TIPS AND LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS THAT TERRY BRADSHAW WON'T TELL YOU ABOUT THE SUPER BOWL

Sometime during the two-week carnival leading up to Super Bowl XXVII, a player or coach from one of the participating teams will respond to a reporter's question by dismissing all the distractions and pressures swirling around him. "It's just another football game," he'll say.

Of course, we all know that's nonsense. Maybe the Super Bowl was another game back in '67, when the Green Bay Packers humbled the Kansas City Chiefs before a half-empty Los Angeles Coliseum, but no longer. Says ESPN football analyst Joe Theismann, who quarterbacked the Washington Redskins in Super Bowls XVII and XVIII: "A lot of times coaches will say they want to approach [the Super Bowl] just like any other game, but you can't, because you're playing stud poker with five cards. You don't get a second chance. And you may never get there again."

In 26 Super Bowls, enough history has played itself out to show that there is something different about this game, and that it requires a certain type of team to win it. On any given Sunday, the football pundit's adage goes, any team can beat any other team. Not so on Super Bowl Sunday.

SPORT ARCHIVE

The Super Bowl-veteran Vikings fell to the Steelers in Super Bowl IX.

RUN THE FOOTBALL

The passing game might pull out some victories during the regular season, but to win the Super Bowl, you must run the football.

Get this: The team with superior rushing numbers has won 22 of the 26 Super Bowls and the last 10. A running game wears out a defense physically and emotionally. No one knows that better than the Buffalo Bills, who gave up 172 rushing yards to the New York Giants in Super Bowl XXV. Said Bills linebacker Shane Conlan: "I've never been so tired in a football game in my life. I was even tired in the first quarter."

The key is to establish the running game early. Says NBC analyst Todd Christensen, who played in Super Bowls XV and XVIII for the Los Angeles Raiders: "In Super Bowl XXV, [Bills running back] Thurman Thomas had 135 yards against the Giants, but most of his yards came late in the game. All the other guys who had big rushing games in the Super Bowls established their running game early on. Then when they came up on third-and-four or second-and-one, their teams could drive the defense crazy."

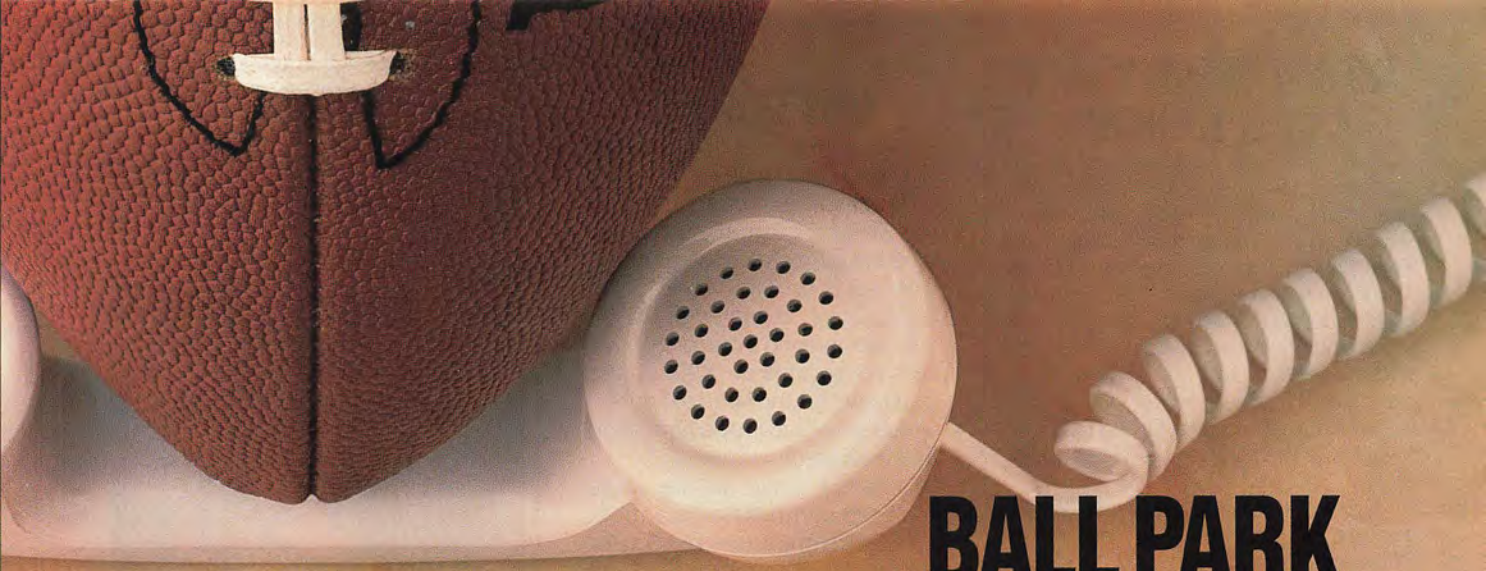
AL MESSERSCHMIDT

EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Teams with Super Bowl experience are 9-2 against clubs making their first appearance in the Big Show. The two teams with experience that were defeated? No surprise here: the Minnesota Vikings and Denver Broncos. Minnesota lost its third Super Bowl to the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1975, while Denver lost its second Super Bowl to the New York Giants in '87.

The Redskins' Super Bowl XVII win was keyed by John Riggins' first-half rushing success.

BY NEIL COHEN



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4. You'll then be entered to win a trip to the big game in Pasadena. Or you'll find out instantly if you've won one of 100 NFL-licensed footballs.

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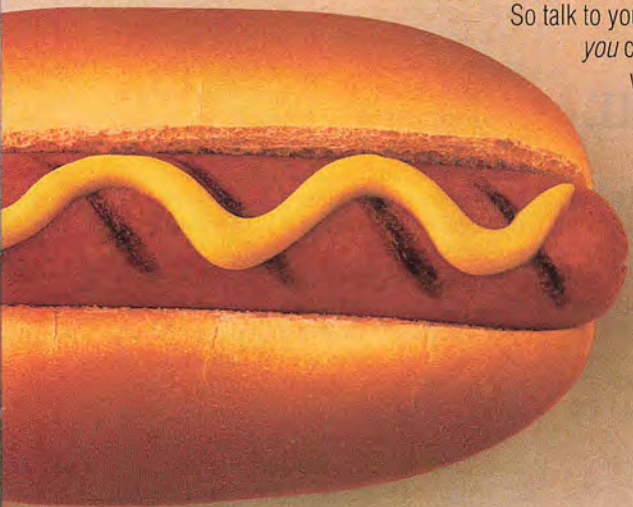

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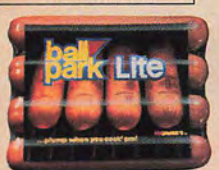

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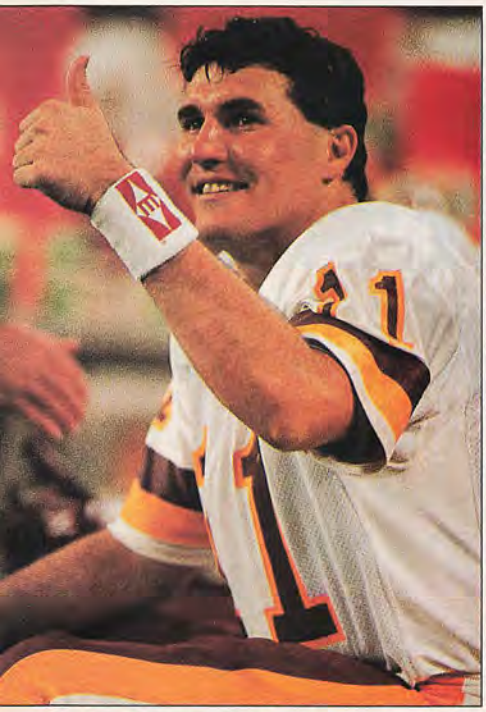
WHEN WILL THEY EVER LEARN?

With the notable exception of Joe Namath, players who talk trash about their opponents before a Super Bowl usually end up eating their words. Take Fred Williamson of Super Bowl I fame. The Kansas City Chiefs' brash cornerback boasted of the punishment he would inflict on the Green Bay Packers' wide receivers, but instead got hammered on a Packers power sweep midway through the game. Green Bay won the NFL's first Super Bowl resoundingly.

You would think players and coaches would have learned from Williamson's mistake, but prior to Super Bowl XXV, Bills lineman Bruce Smith lamented having to face the Giants instead of what he saw as a more-talented San Francisco 49ers team. "The 49ers are famous," he said. "I wanted the 49ers." The Giants, of course, beat the Bills, 20-19.

Before Super Bowl XXVI, Bills defensive-line coach Chuck Dickerson aimed some gratuitous insults at the Redskins' offensive line. Dickerson called Joe Jacoby a "Neanderthal" who "slobbers a lot," labeled tackle Jim Lachey a "ballerina in a 310-pound body," and said center Jeff Bostic was "ugly, just like the rest of them." The Redskins thumped the Bills, 37-24.



TOM DIPACE

The Bills' trash-talking provided QB Mark Rypien and the Redskins with added motivation in Super Bowl XXVI.

OUTFOXED

During halftime of last year's Super Bowl, the Fox network aired a live broadcast of "In Living Color." Its goal of drawing viewers away from the halftime spectacle on CBS worked. "In Living Color" attracted 29 million viewers, making it one of the top-rated programs of 1992. That's bad news for the NFL, of course, which stands to lose a bundle on its TV contract.

The NFL, however, has made plans to combat Fox's antics. The halftime show for Super Bowl XVII will feature Michael Jackson in a 10-minute performance centering around his song "Heal the World."

NFL spokesman Greg Aiello denies that the booking of the King of Pop is a direct reaction to Fox's airing of "In Living Color," pointing out that halftime festivities have long-since progressed beyond marching bands. The halftime show in 1991, for example, featured New Kids on the Block, and Gloria Estefan was showcased last year. "Of course," Aiello concedes, "a star of Michael Jackson's magnitude takes it up another notch."

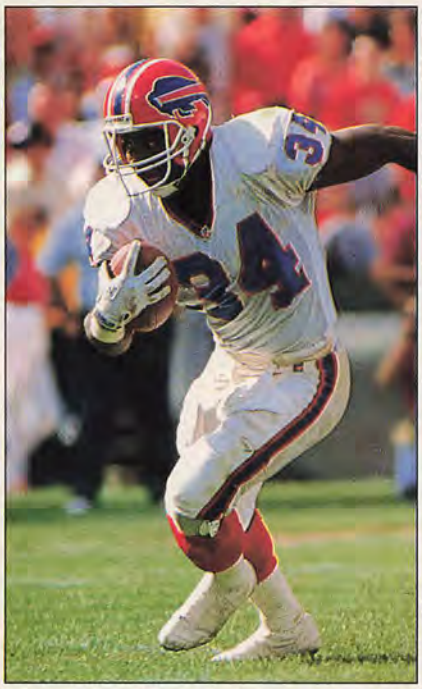
The Fox network, for the moment, is mum about its halftime show, but stay tuned. This could be better than the Bud Bowl.

STICK WITH THE VETERANS

The Super Bowl is a veteran's game. Twenty-two of the 27 MVPs had seven or more years of NFL experience, and countless other veterans who haven't taken home the trophy have loomed large. Max McGee, for instance, caught seven passes for 138 yards in Super Bowl I. Art Monk contributed significantly in last year's Super Bowl with 113 receiving yards.

"Veteran players have that experience that enables them to put the distractions of the Super Bowl out of the way," says Christensen. "The 'golly-gee-whiz' thing is gone. They realize this is their moment."

Rookies, on the other hand, have contributed little to Super Bowls, with the notable exceptions of Baltimore Colts kicker Jim O'Brien, who kicked the winning field goal in Super Bowl IV, and Washington Redskins running back Timmy Smith, who rushed for 204 yards in Super Bowl XXII.



MICKEY PFLEGER

Thurman Thomas finally found his helmet but found few holes in Super Bowl XXVI.

MOMENTOUS MISTAKES

"Nobody wants to make the mistake that costs your team the Super Bowl," says Theismann. But the game's intense pressure often causes players to do things they might not have done all season.

Take quarterback Ron Jaworski of the Philadelphia Eagles, who had thrown just 12 interceptions in 16 games during the 1980 regular season, but had his first pass of Super Bowl XV picked off by Oakland Raiders linebacker Rod Martin.

Miami Dolphins running back Larry Csonka had no fumbles during the 1971 regular season but coughed up a handoff from quarterback Bob Griese in Super Bowl VI against the Dallas Cowboys. The Cowboys recovered and kicked a field goal en route to a 24-3 thrashing of the Dolphins.

And, of course, we all remember Bills running back Thurman Thomas' moment of embarrassment in last year's Super Bowl, when a misplaced helmet caused him to miss the first two plays of the game. After finding his helmet, though, Thomas couldn't find many holes against the Redskins' stingy defense, which limited him to 13 yards in 10 carries.

PAUL JASIENSKI

John Elway is 0-3 against the NFC in Super Bowl competition.

STREAKY BUSINESS

Is the NFC, winner of nine of the last 10 Super Bowls, that much better than the AFC? "When we talk about the NFC," says Theismann, "we talk about great teams: the 49ers, the Giants, the Redskins. When we talk about the AFC, we talk about individuals: Dan Marino, Jim Kelly, John Elway. A great individual is not going to beat a great football team." It's tough to argue the point. Marino, Kelly and Elway are a combined 0-6 in Super Bowls.

THE SUPER LETDOWN

Question: Why are conference championship games so much more exciting than Super Bowls? Answer: Conference games offer a home-field advantage and often feature traditional rivalries—Browns-Broncos, Jets-Dolphins and Redskins-Cowboys, to name a few.

"The NFC championship game in 1982 was bigger in my mind than the Super Bowl," says Theismann. "The stands shook. The ground was shaking beneath my feet. There was a frenzied atmosphere that you don't get in the Super Bowl. A Super Bowl is a media event. A championship game is a football game."

THE RELAXATION RESPONSE

A point of psychology: According to Theismann, uptight teams (those with tense coaches and players, rigid game plans, distrust of the media, curfews) tend to lose Super Bowls. Relaxed teams tend to win.

"What made [the Redskins] flat in Super Bowl XVIII [against the Raiders] was that we were overprepared," says Theismann. "When you prepare too much you remove that degree of spontaneity, and by doing that you take the pop and luster out of a performance."

Perhaps the most glaring contrast in styles was Super Bowl XV, which featured the uptight Eagles and the relaxed Raiders. "I remember [Raiders linebacker] Ted Hendricks saying to us that there were a lot of reasons we had to win this game," says Christensen. "But one reason was for the other 26 teams. If the Eagles win, all the coaches will think that [overpreparing for the Super Bowl] is the way to do it." So the Raiders, out to prove that they could party all night long and still win the game, whipped the Eagles, 27-10.

AL MESSERSCHMIDT

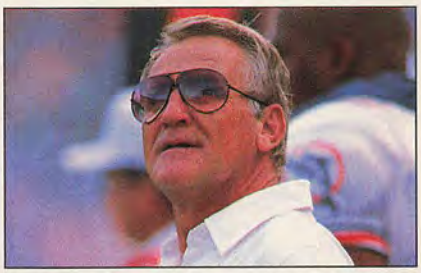
The relaxed Raiders and uptight Eagles tangled in Super Bowl XV.

MICKEY PFLEGER

The Giants' Phil McConkey celebrates in Super Bowl XXI.

THE SHULA FACTOR

If the Dolphins advance to Super Bowl XXVII, Don Shula will become the first head coach to guide a team to the Super Bowl in four different decades. He could also become the first head coach to lose five Super Bowls.



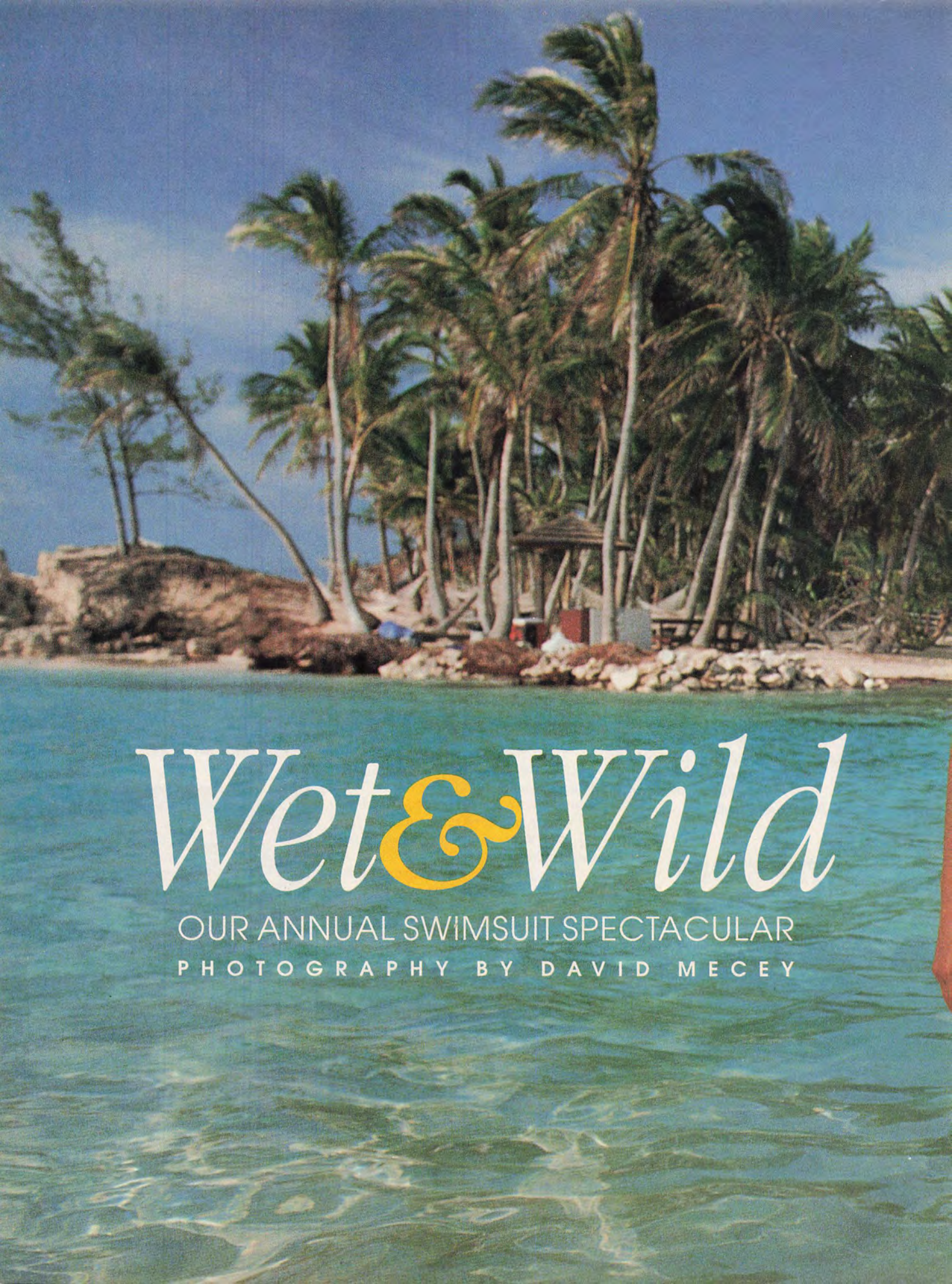
TOM DIPACE

Shula's fourth Super Bowl decade?

A SUPER BOWL PREDICTION

The Rose Bowl is the site of Super Bowl XXVII, and don't be surprised if the game is a blowout. In the four previous Super Bowls played in Pasadena (1977, '80, '83 and '87), the winner has averaged 32 points, the loser just 18.★

Neil Cohen is a former SPORT editor.



Wet & Wild

OUR ANNUAL SWIMSUIT SPECTACULAR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID MECEY

April and Shannon
April, in a suit from Radio Fiji, and Shannon, wearing a suit from Pan Dulce, are welcome sights to the Bahamas and the annual SPORT Magazine swimsuit issue.
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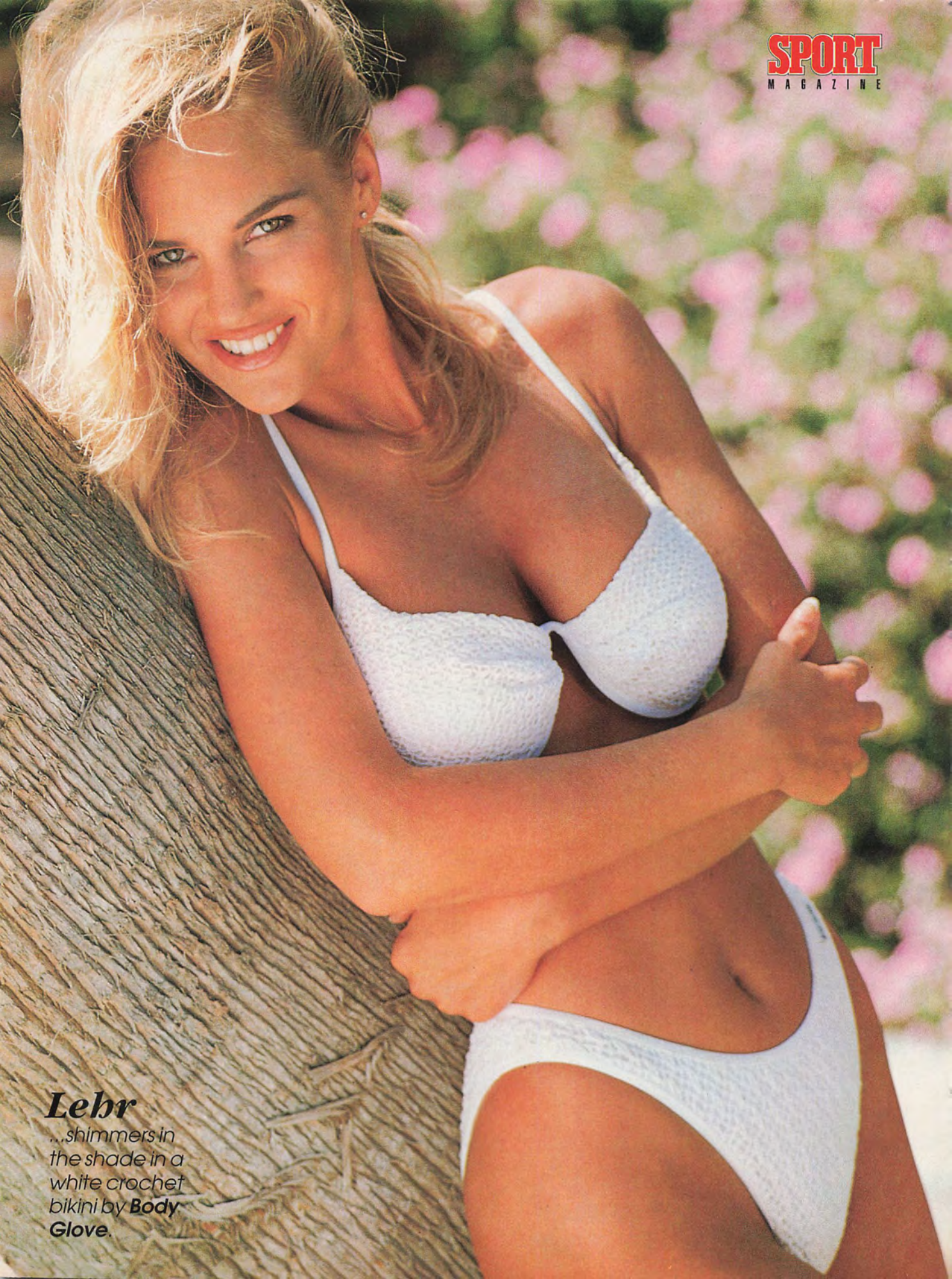
MAGAZINE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Lehr
...shimmers in the shade in a white crochet bikini by **Body Glove**.

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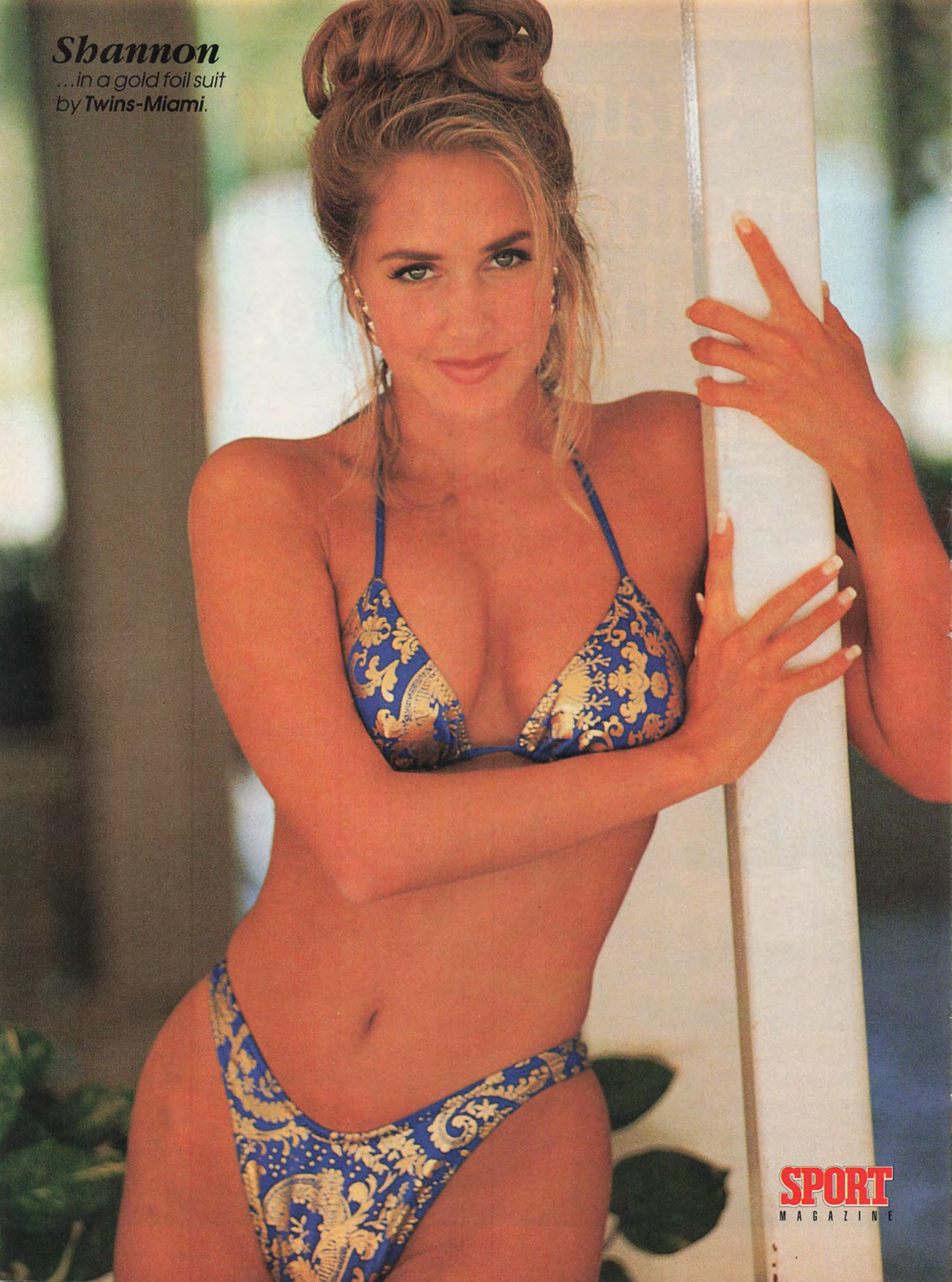
Shannon
...in a gold foil suit
by Twins-Miami.
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Denise
...glitters at the Ocean Club in an aqua-sequined suit by Raisins.
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Jill
...competes
with the scenery
in a wraparound
suit by
Playmates.
SPORT
MAGAZINE

SPORT
MAGAZINE

Lehr *relaxes poolside in a dashing suit by* ***Robin Piccone.***

Carla
...relaxes in a
swimsuit from
Twins-Miami.
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Shannon
...wearing a floral print from ***Baja Blue****, cools off in the gentle Caribbean.*

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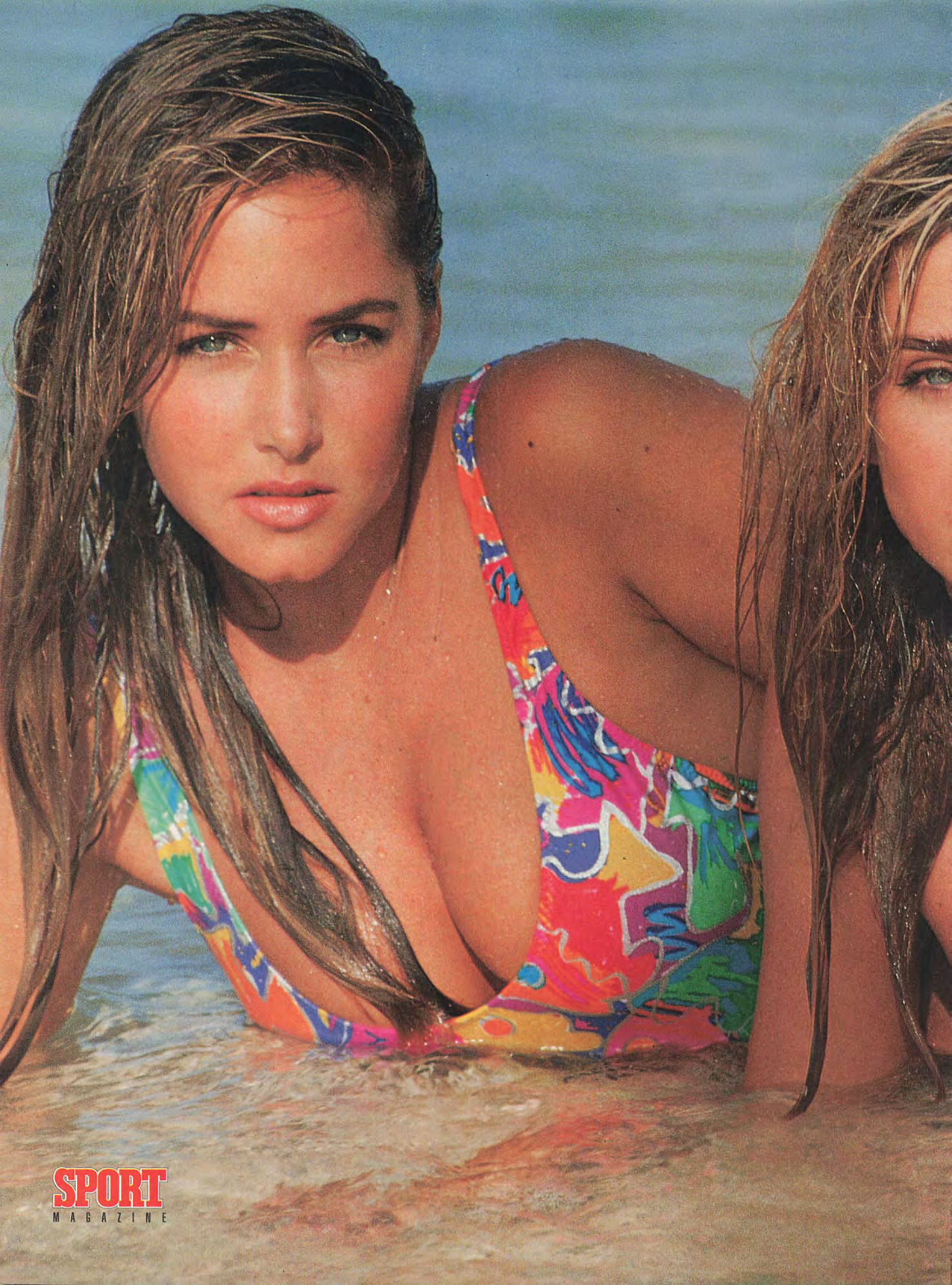
MAGAZINE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Shannon and April

...Shannon in a suit by **Pan Dulce**, *and April in a suit by* **Radio Fiji** *at Blue Lagoon.*

Rachel
...sports the workout look in a suit by California Swimwear.
SPORT
MAGAZINE

Lehr
...in a suit by
Venus.
SPORT
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Denise
... beauty on the
beach in a suit by
Twins-Miami.

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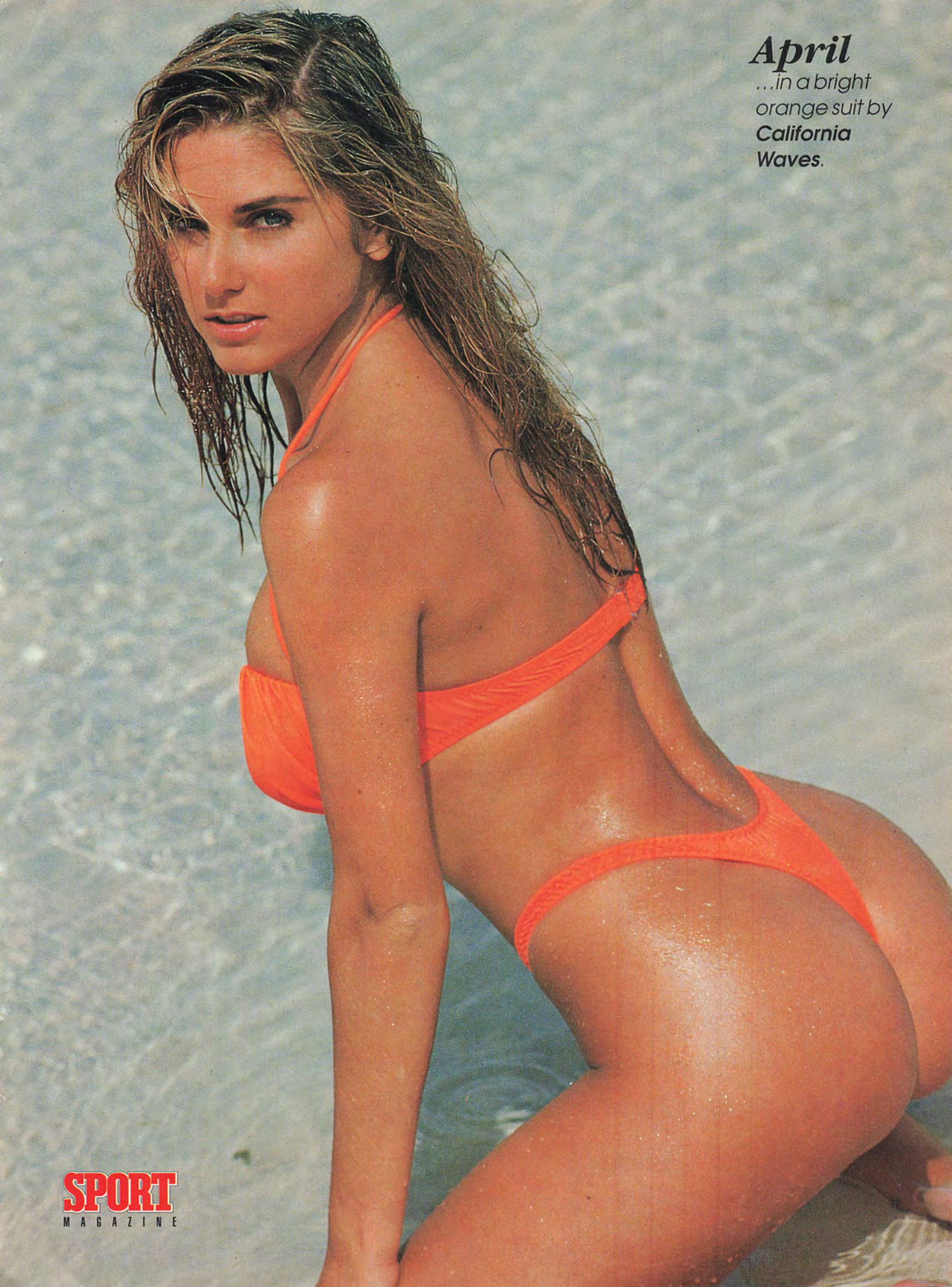
Jill
...absorbs the morning sun in a bikini from ***Body Glove.***


April
...in a bright orange suit by California Waves.
SPORT
MAGAZINE

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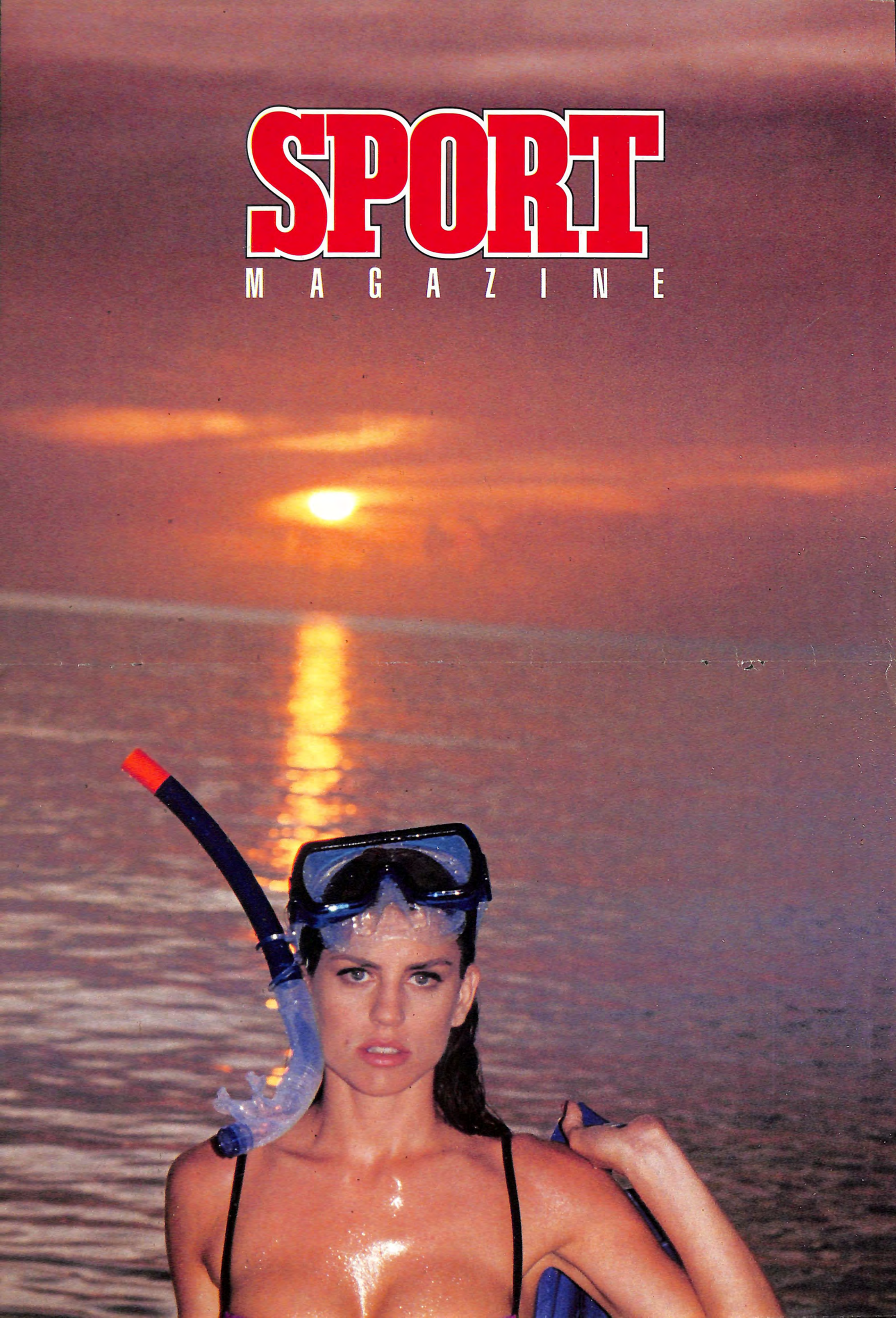

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Denise

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MAGAZINE

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Jill
..., wrapped in a floral print from ***Twins-Miami****.*

Denise
...at Nirvana, in a
suit by Pan Dulce.
SPORT
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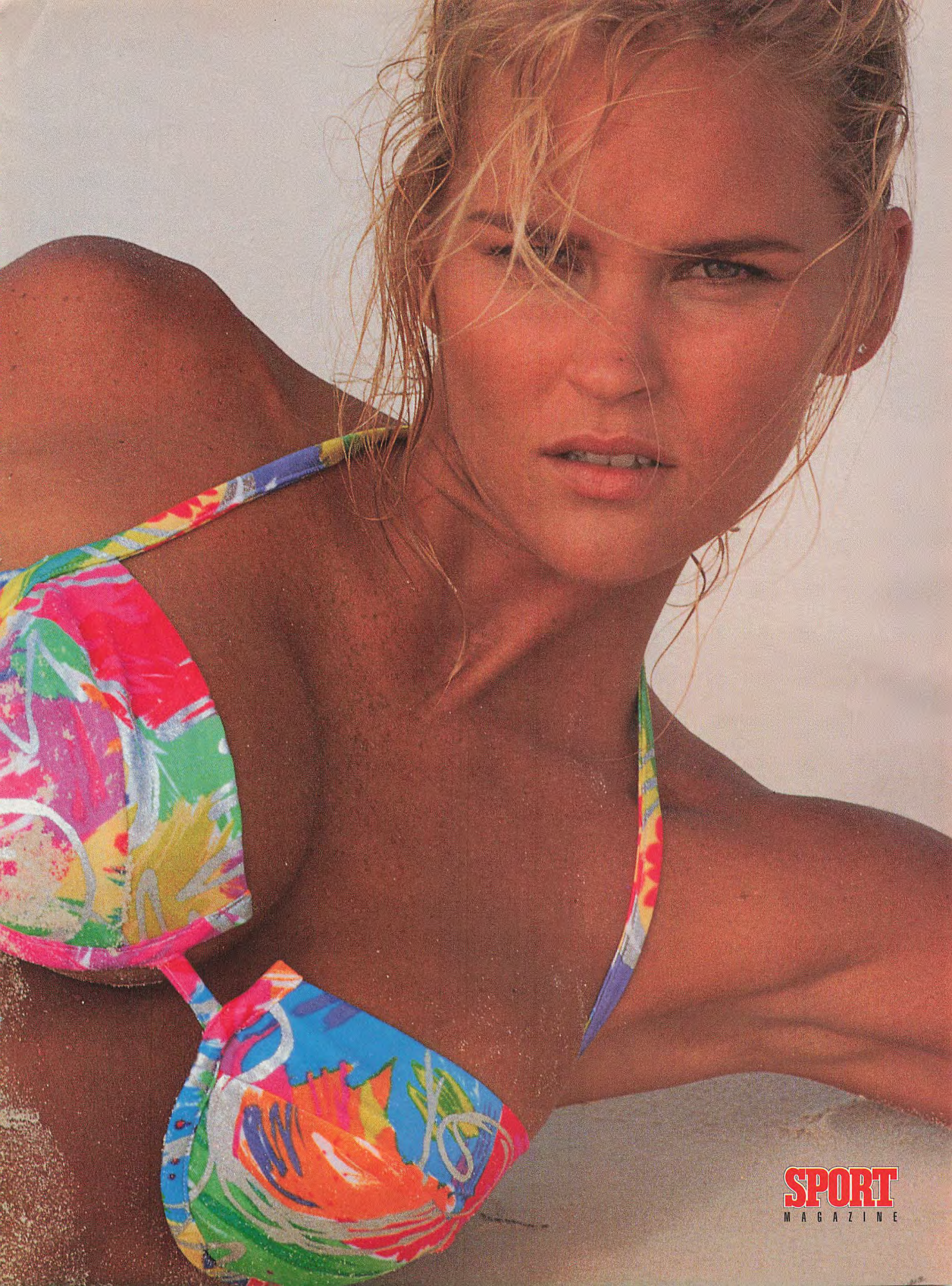
Shannon
...caught in the
setting Bahamian
sun.

Lehr
...sands herself
in a two-piece
print by **Venus**.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Rachel
... in a one-piece from ***Playmates****, on the roof of the Prince George Dockside Cafe.*

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MAGAZINE

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MAGAZINE

Carla
. . . in a sequined two-piece by ***Radio Fiji.***

Rachel

...lounges in the sand in a green velvet panne suit by ***Tango Rose****.*

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SPORT
MAGAZINE

Shannon
...wades in the waters of Blue Lagoon in a suit by **Pan Dulce.**

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April

...stretches in the warmth of the Bahamian sun in a bikini from ***Pierre Cardin.***

Jill
... at the Ocean Club in a suit from Bill Blass.
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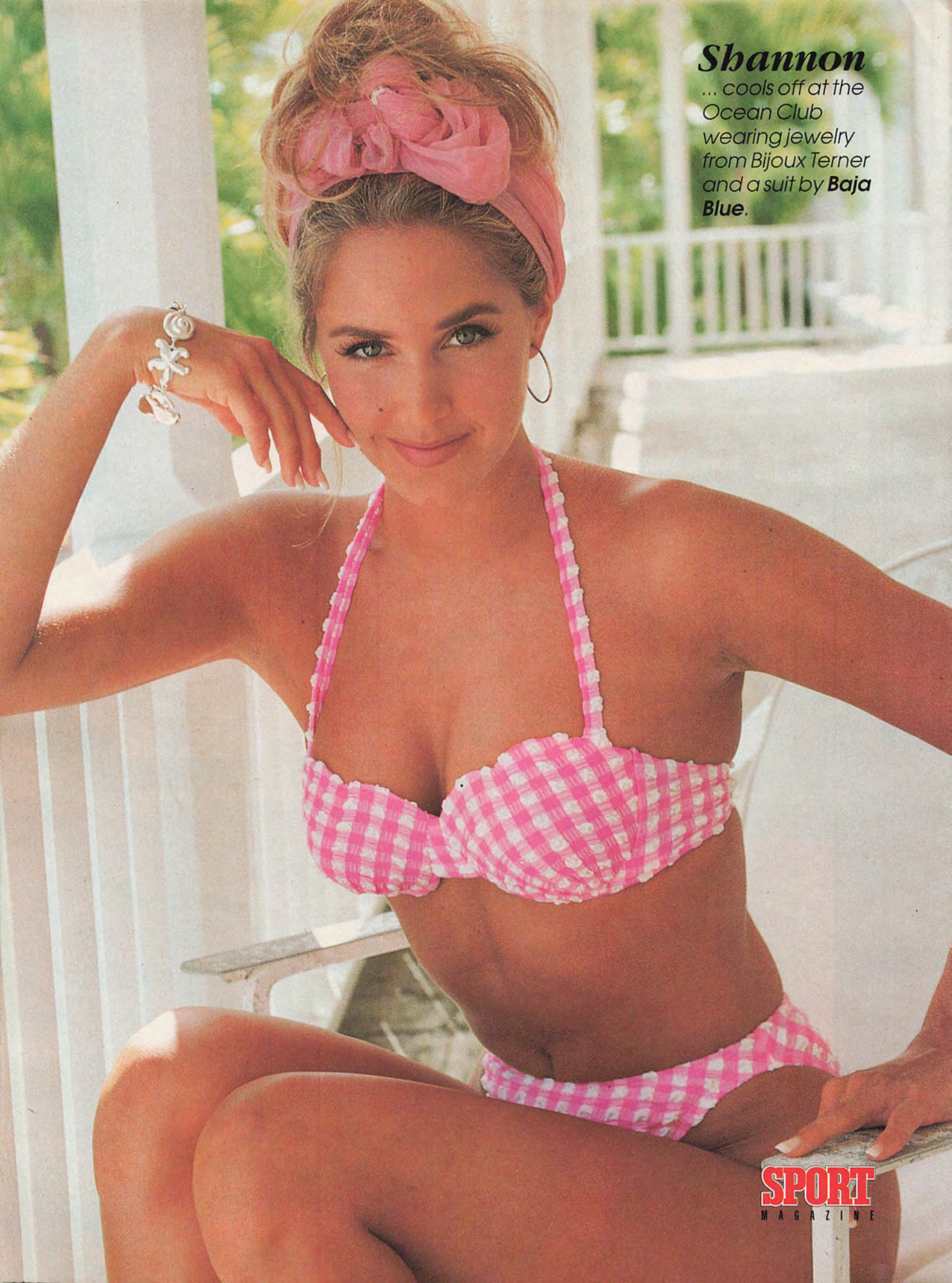

Shannon
... cools off at the Ocean Club wearing jewelry from Bijoux Terner and a suit by ***Baja Blue****.*

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Lehr

...sparkles in the surf of Rose Island in a suit by ***Venus.***

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Cowboys	88 Irvin	Vikings	34 Walker
Broncos	7 Elway	Vikings	81 Carter
Broncos	26 Humphrey	Vikings	75 Millard
Bills	12 Kelly	Vikings	47 Browner
Bills	78 B. Smith	Falcons	21 D. Sanders
Bills	83 Reed	Falcons	80 Rison
Bills	97 C. Bennett	Rams	11 Everett
Bills	34 Thomas	Saints	56 Swilling
Dolphins	13 Marino	Saints	3 Hebert
Dolphins	83 Clayton	49ers	16 Montana
Bengals	30 Woods	49ers	80 Rice
Bengals	7 Esiason	Colts	11 George
Browns	19 Kosar	Packers	7 Majkowski
Browns	21 Metcalf	Packers	77 Mandarich
Oilers	1 Moon	Steelers	6 Brister
Eagles	12 Cunningham	Steelers	26 Woodson
Fagles	59 Joyner	Steelers	33 Hoge
Redskins	58 Marshall	Chiefs	58 Thomas
Redskins	11 Rypien	Lions	20 B. Sanders
Redskins	81 Monk	Chargers	55 Seau
Jets	88 Toon	Chargers	35 Butts
Jets	85 Moore		

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Suns	34	Barkley	Hawks	21	Wilkins
Suns	7	Johnson	Pistons	11	Thomas
Blazers	22	Drexler	Lakers	32	Magic
Heat	4	Seikaly	Nets	44	Coleman
Spurs	32	Elliott	Warriors	17	Mullin
Spurs	50	Robinson	Knicks	33	Ewing
Hornets	2	Johnson	Rockets	34	Olajuwon
Jazz	32	Malone	Pistons	10	Rodman

OLYMPIC JERSEY by Champion $39.95 The official replica jersey of the 1992 Olympic Games and a true collectors item. Available for 9 of your favorite NBA stars. Sizes S, M, L, XL.

Jordan	9	Malone	11	Bird	7
Robinson	5	Mullin	13	Pippen	8
Ewing	6	Stockton	12	Drexler	10
Johnson	15	Barkley	14	Laettner	4

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Auburn	ABCDE GHIJK MNO R T V X
Brigham Young	ABC EFGH L R
California	ABC GH K MN
Clemson	ABCDEFG IJKLMNO RST X
Colorado	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP RSTUVWX
UConn	C R U
Duke	ABC EFGHIJKLMN PQRSTUVWX
Florida	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTU X
Florida St.	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP RSTUVWX
Georgetown	ABC EFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWX
Georgia	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO QR TU
Georgia Tech	ABC EFGHIJKLMNOP RSTUVWX
Hawaii	ABC EFG R
Illinois	ABC EFGHIJKLMNOPQR T VWX
Indiana	ABC EFGHIJKLMNOPQRST VWX
Iowa	ABCDEFG IJKLMNOPQR WX
Kansas	ABC EFGHI KLMNO R T
Kentucky	ABC EFGH KL NOP RSTU
Louisiana St.	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO QRSTU WX
Louisville	ABC EFG IJKL NO Q
Maryland	A EFG KL NO
Miami, Fla.	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP RSTUV X
Michigan	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWX
Michigan St.	ABCDEFGHI KLMNO RST VW
Minnesota	ABC EFGHI K MN
Mississippi	A C E G KL NO R
Mississippi St.	A C E GH K MNO R
Missouri	ABC EFGHI K NO T
Navy	A DE G K
Nebraska	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP R WX
N. Carolina	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWX
N. Carolina St.	AB EFG IJKLMNO Q T
Notre Dame	ABC EFGHIJKLMN P R T V X
Ohio St.	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP RSTU
Oklahoma	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO QRSTUVWX
Oklahoma St.	AB EFGH KL NO
Oregon	AB E GH LMNO X
Penn St.	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP RSTUVWX
Pittsburgh	ABC EFGHI KL N
Purdue	ABCDEFG I KL NO T
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SMU	E GH L NO
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Stanford	ABC EFGHI MN T X
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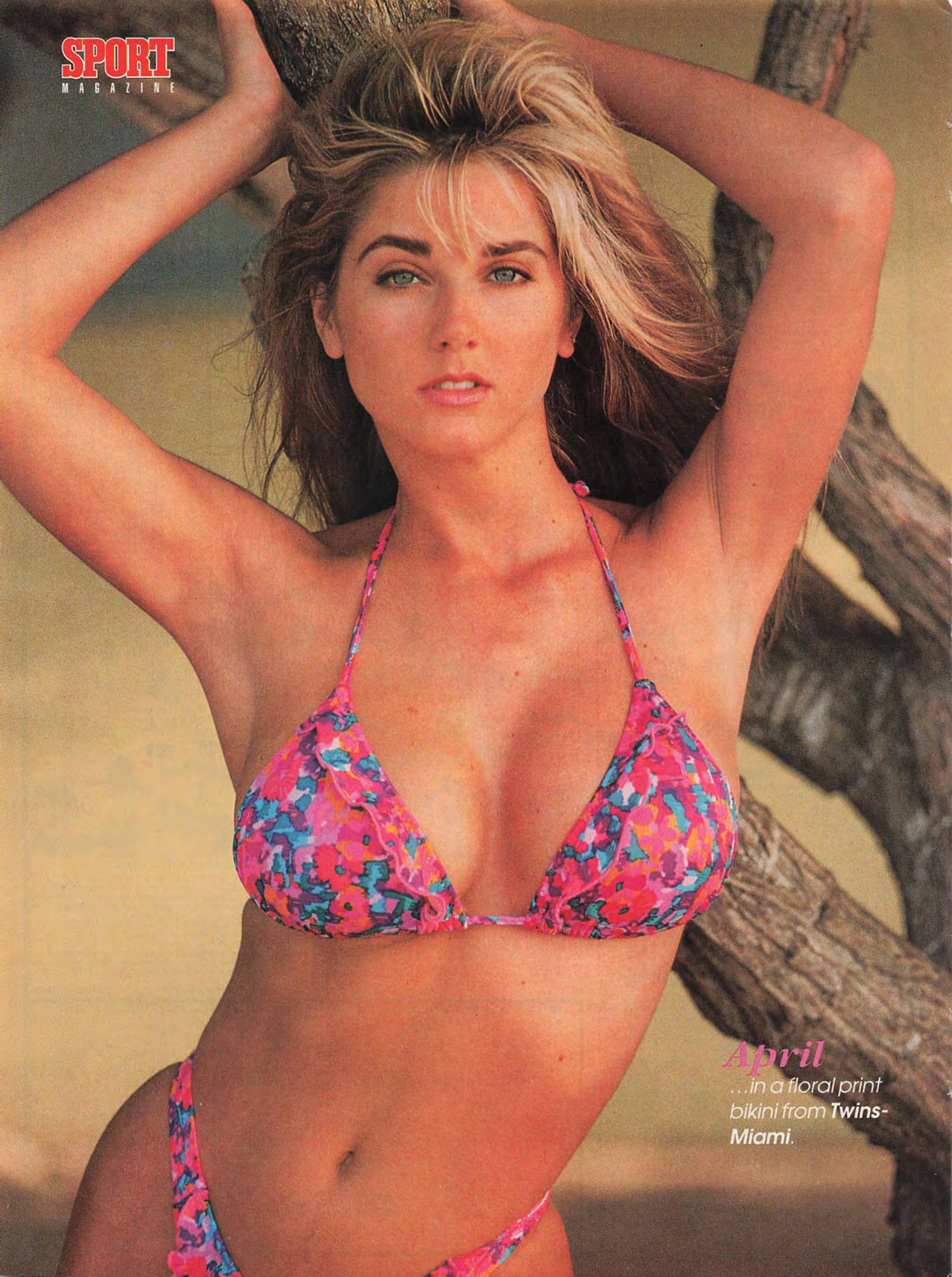
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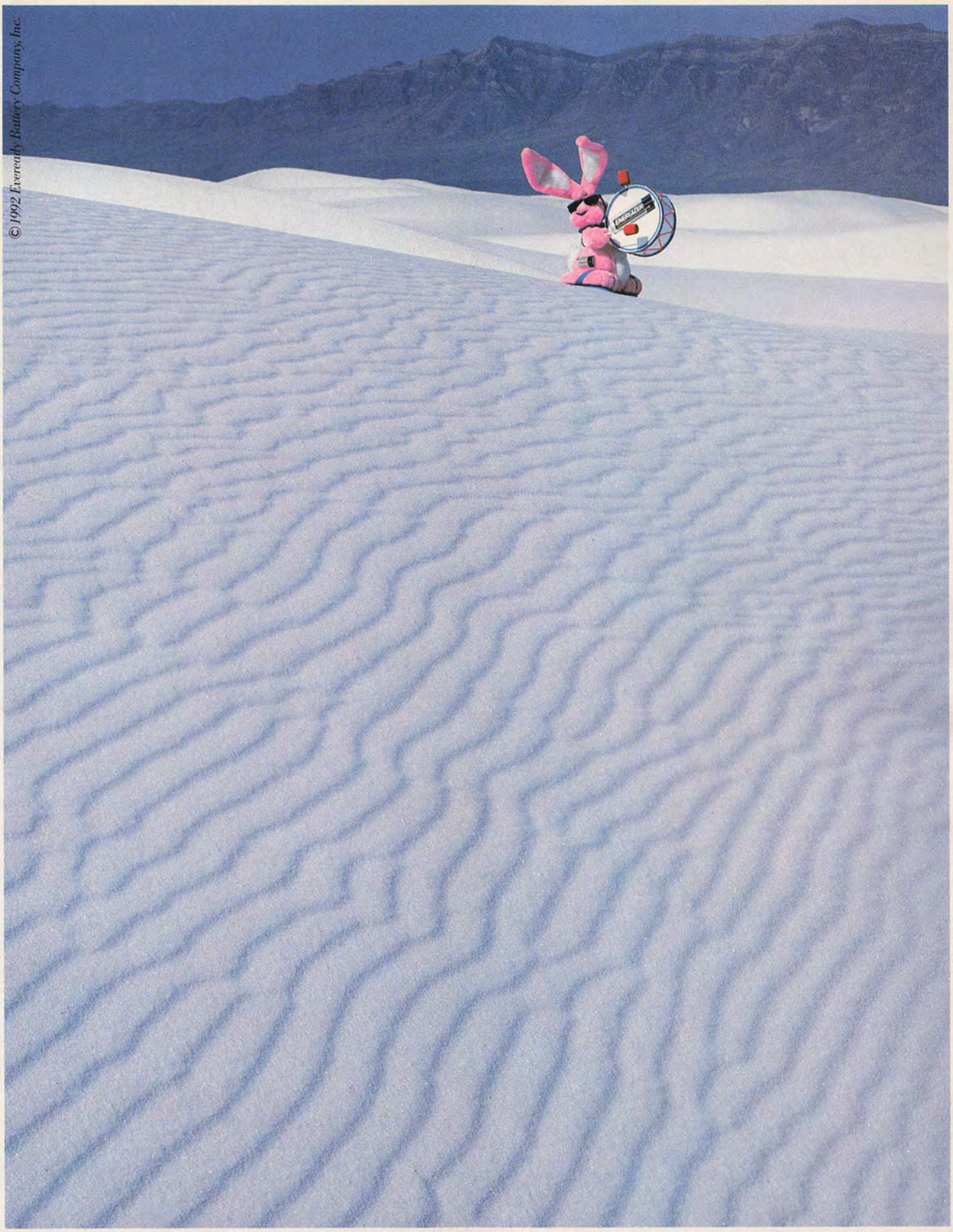

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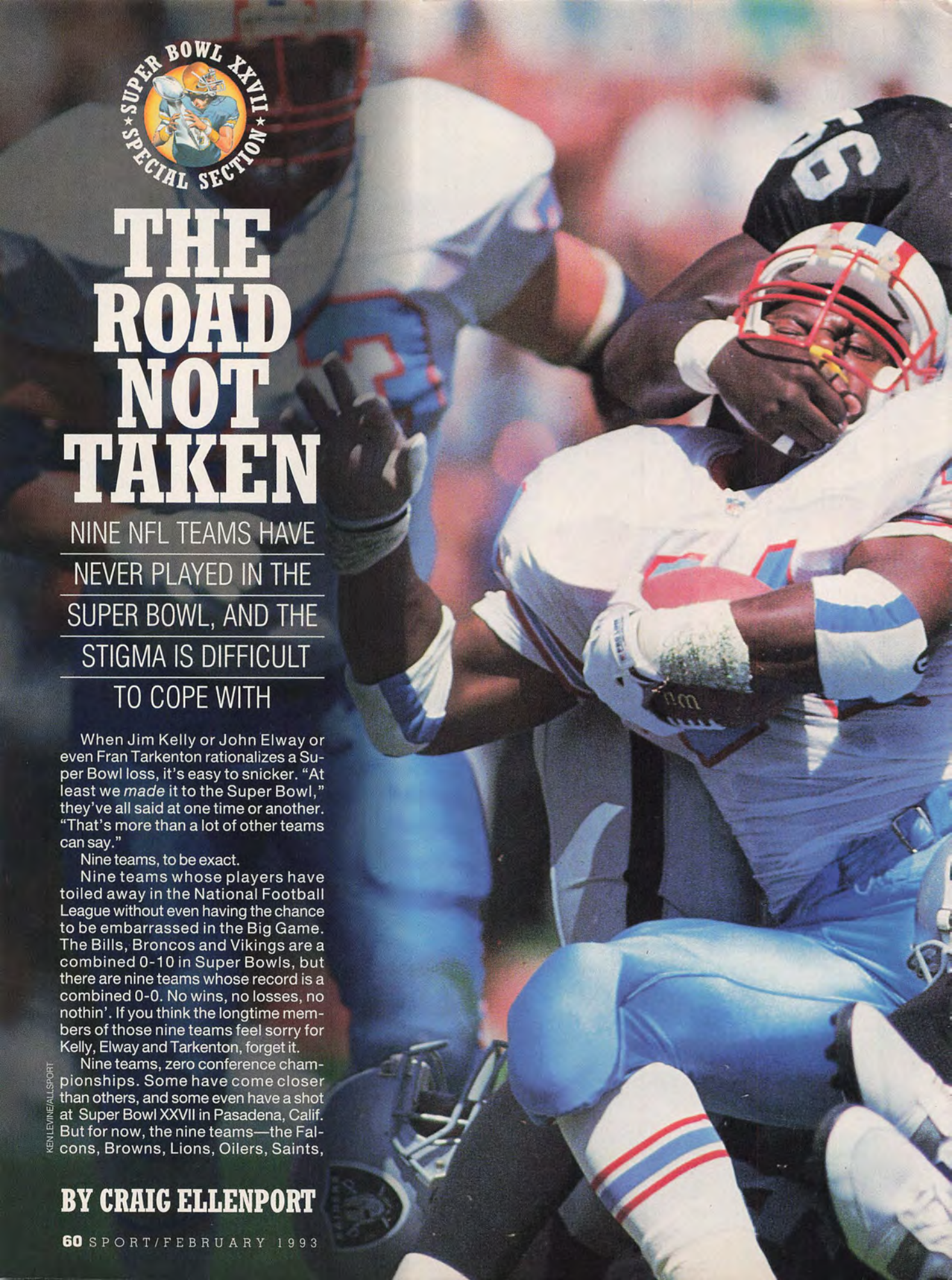


THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

NINE NFL TEAMS HAVE NEVER PLAYED IN THE SUPER BOWL, AND THE STIGMA IS DIFFICULT TO COPE WITH

When Jim Kelly or John Elway or even Fran Tarkenton rationalizes a Super Bowl loss, it's easy to snicker. "At least we *made* it to the Super Bowl," they've all said at one time or another. "That's more than a lot of other teams can say."

Nine teams, to be exact.

Nine teams whose players have toiled away in the National Football League without even having the chance to be embarrassed in the Big Game. The Bills, Broncos and Vikings are a combined 0-10 in Super Bowls, but there are nine teams whose record is a combined 0-0. No wins, no losses, no nothin'. If you think the longtime members of those nine teams feel sorry for Kelly, Elway and Tarkenton, forget it.

Nine teams, zero conference championships. Some have come closer than others, and some even have a shot at Super Bowl XXVII in Pasadena, Calif. But for now, the nine teams—the Falcons, Browns, Lions, Oilers, Saints,

KEN LEVINE/ALLSPORT

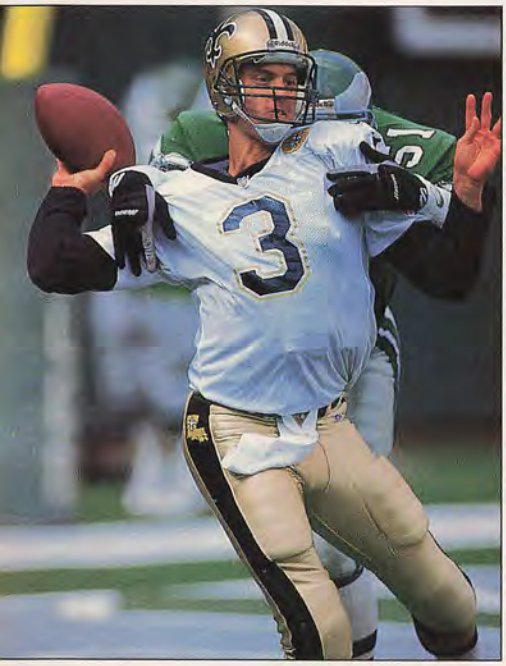
BY CRAIG ELLENPORT

MATTHEWS
OILERS
WAYMER
4

Cardinals, Chargers, Seahawks and Buccaneers—all share the same hollow results.

Looking for a common thread among these nine futile franchises? Here's a reach: Five of them play in dome stadiums. OK, so Atlanta just started playing in the Georgia Dome. Nevertheless, no dome-stadium team has ever been to the Super Bowl, so perhaps there is some validity here.

It makes sense insofar as Cleveland is the only outdoor, cold-weather team among the nine—and the Browns have come the closest to reaching the Super Bowl. The Chargers play in weather conditions more ideal than even a dome-controlled climate, and that may have been their downfall in 1981, when they had to play Cincinnati in below-freezing conditions.



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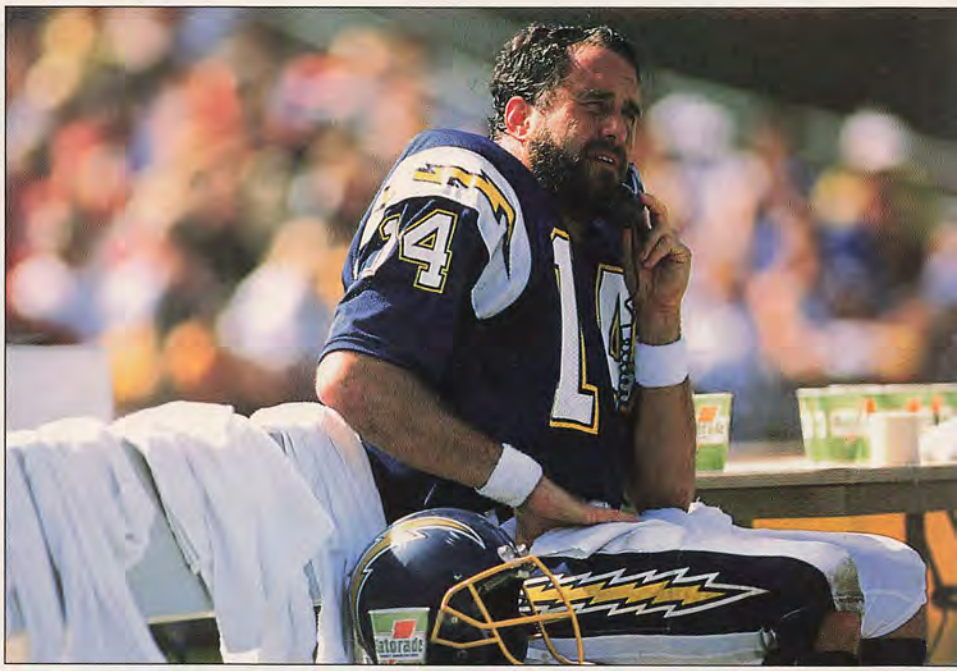

PAUL JASIENSKI

Bobby Hebert (left) hungers for that elusive Super Bowl, the one former Chargers' QB Dan Fouts (right) never quite reached.

There's no better example of the dome syndrome than the Oilers. It's been said that the Oilers, ever so comfortable playing in their cozy dome, won't reach the Super Bowl until they get the home-field advantage throughout the playoffs. Houston has played in two AFC championship games, in 1978 and '79. Both games were on the road. Both games were in cold weather (Pittsburgh). Both were losses.

Sadly for the Oilers and their fans, those Houston teams, nicknamed the "Luv Ya Blue Crew," were probably the second-best teams in the NFL behind the Steelers.

The Oilers haven't been close since, despite in recent years having one of the league's most talented teams, and time is running out for them and their gifted quarterback, Warren Moon.

The comfy-climate theory is underscored by the fact that five of the above-mentioned teams' cities have hosted 12 Super Bowls (seven in New Orleans, two in Tampa and one each in Houston, San Diego and Detroit). And in those 12 Super Bowls, not once has the hometown team so much as made the playoffs. The closest call was in 1989 when New Orleans finished at 9-7 but could only watch as San Francisco pounded Denver in Super Bowl XXIV, 55-10, at the Louisiana Superdome.

The Saints have to worry about winning a playoff game before they can think of hosting the Super Bowl. The fans certainly have been patient. New Orleans joined the NFL in 1967 and didn't have a winning season until 1987. The Saints finished at 12-3 that year, and they've been knocking at the door ever since, thanks to an owner (Tom Benson) who had the good judgment to hire a solid general manager (Jim Finks) who had the good judgment to hire a solid head coach (Jim Mora). Benson purchased a majority interest in the Saints in 1985, and that's when football fortunes in the Crescent City took a turn for the better. It's the stability and consistency of the front office that was missing when the Saints were better known as "the Aints."

"They were making too many changes," says Finks. "It seemed like they were constantly changing coaches, general managers, every other year....There was no continuity."

Indeed, the Saints have had 10 head coaches in their 26-year history. But Mora has been in place since 1986, and his conservative, grind-it-out style, which is more conducive to cold-weather conditions, makes the Saints a better choice to become the first dome team to reach the Super Bowl than, say, the run-and-shoot Oilers.

"I'm very positive about it," Finks says about New Orleans' Super Bowl chances. "I'm also realistic enough to know that this is the most competitive league of any professional sport in the world. It's so hard to win in this business. People don't realize that. Each Sunday you have two teams of equal strength, and the only difference, maybe, is an attitude or confidence. As far as playing ability is concerned, there's not a hell of a lot of difference from best to worst."

Attitude and confidence, eh? Those, along with the question of coaching stability, explain why the Cardinals are as far away from the Super Bowl as any team. The Cards haven't come close to the playoffs since moving to Phoenix in

> "I'm very positive about it. I'm also realistic enough to know that this is the most competitive league of any professional sport in the world."
>
> *— Saints GM Jim Finks on his team's Super Bowl chances*

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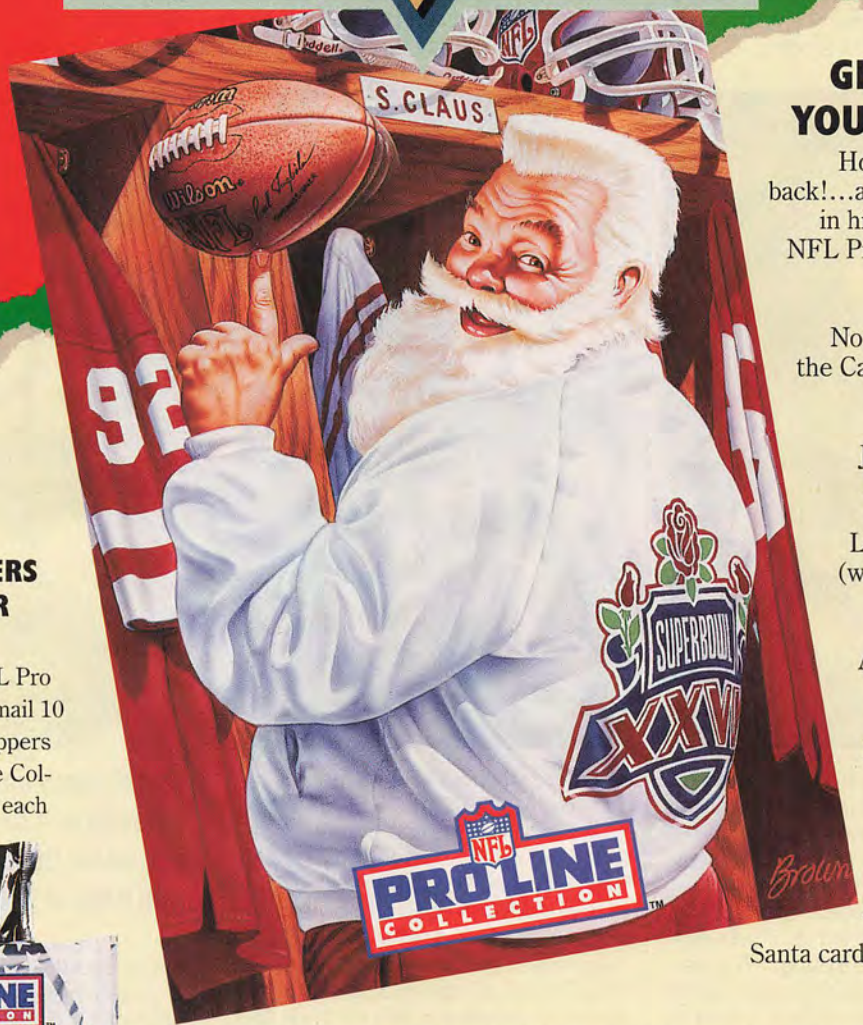

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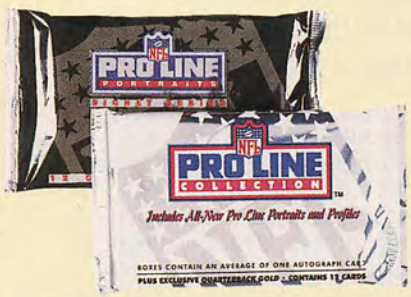
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1988. Their four-year record in Arizona heading into the 1992 campaign was 21-43. And if attitude is everything, then it's no wonder the Cardinals are so bad. Morale throughout the organization is dismal, according to at least one player who was fortunate enough to escape.

"The players, they just don't want to be there," says safety Lonnie Young, who played six seasons with the Cards before being traded to the New York Jets in 1991. "We're all in this game to go to the Super Bowl and experience being in the playoffs, things like that. You want to be a part of the big-time. In Phoenix, you play before 35-40,000 fans. That's not being a pro. You see more than that in college. It's just a real bad atmosphere around there. It's kind of a real drill-sergeant-type atmosphere. Everybody's real tight."

> "[Someday] I want to step back and figure out exactly how much money John Elway has cost me."
>
> *— Chiefs coach Marty Schottenheimer, who lost two AFC title games to the Broncos while coaching the Browns*

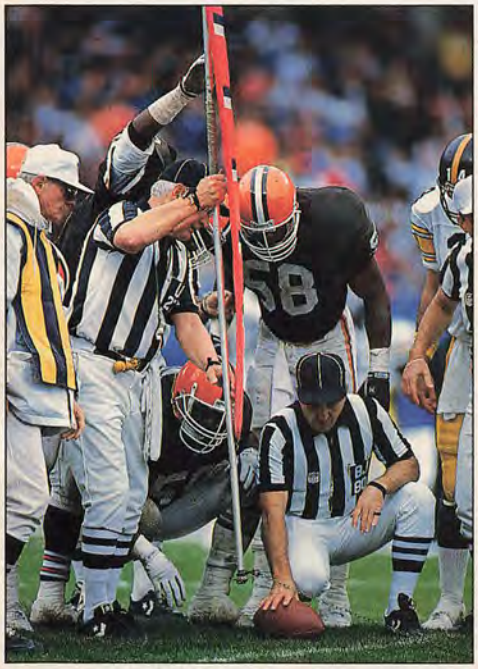
from general manager Larry Wilson, who was 2-1 as a 1979 fill-in) was Don Coryell, who coached the Cards from 1973-77. Coryell took over the Chargers in 1978 and ran the show in San Diego until midway through the 1986 season, compiling a 69-56 record.

From 1979-82, the Chargers had a 39-18 record, tops in the AFC over that four-year span and second in the NFL only to Dallas. The Chargers won three straight AFC West division crowns, from 1979-81, and played in the AFC title game in back-to-back years ('80, '81). Still, for all their success, they have no championship rings to show for it; they lost to the Raiders, 34-27, in 1980, then fell to Cincinnati in frigid Riverfront Stadium, 27-7, in '81. And it's not the losses per se that eat away at former Chargers quarterback Dan Fouts, the heart and soul of those teams, so much as the yearly reminders of what might have been.

"I haven't gone crazy about it," says Fouts, who ranks second on the all-time NFL list for completions, attempts and passing yards. "I don't like talking about being a failure, so it does get a little old when you're reminded of it every year."

As bitter as it is to be reminded of those near misses, the Fouts era amounted to glory years for a team that has floundered of late. Since Fouts retired in 1987, the Chargers have gone through eight starting quarterbacks. From 1988-91, they went 22-42.

In some cases, a team's bad fortunes are due to, well, bad fortune. Take the plights of the Lions and Falcons, who both showed flashes of Super Bowl potential last season but have faltered badly this year. Detroit made a Cinderella-like run and, stunningly, trashed Dallas, 38-6, in its first home playoff game in 34 years. That victory put the Lions into the NFC title game, where they were leveled by eventual Super Bowl-champ Washington. That's



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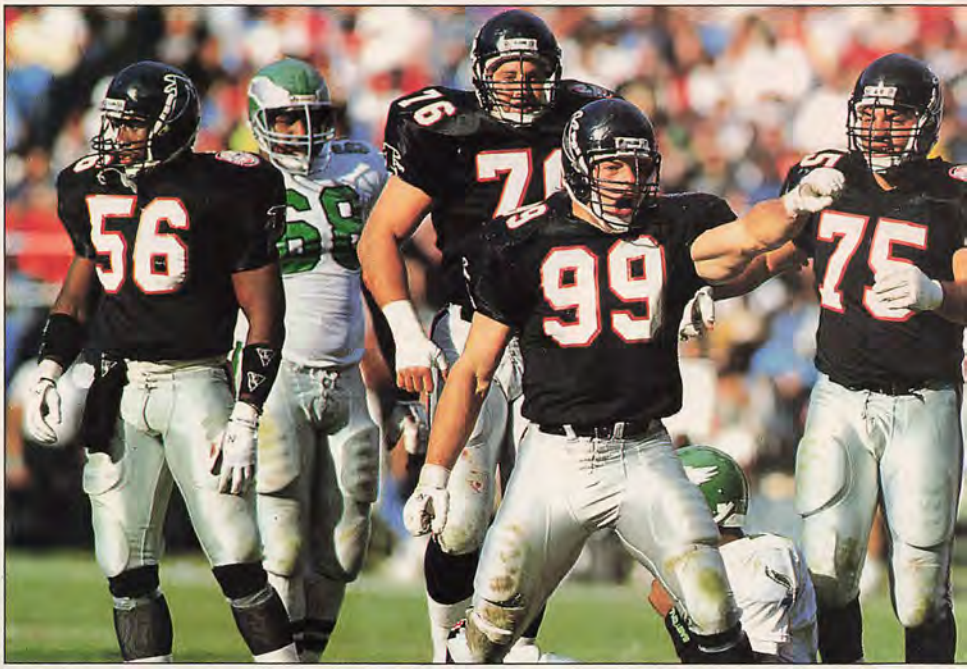


RON VESELY

Does the losing attitude come from the top? Cardinals owner Bill Bidwill has come as close to winning popularity contests among his players as his players have come to the Super Bowl. That's probably no coincidence.

"He's the type of owner that never comes around," says Young. "You never see him. Never. You could be in an elevator with him going down, and he may not say a word to you. It's just not a real family-oriented organization."

As for coaching stability, Joe Bugel started feeling the heat two games into this, his third season on the job. The Cards have had six head coaches in the last 15 years, and an incredible 32 in their 73-year history. By comparison, the Bears have had 10 head coaches in that same period of time.

The last head coach to have a winning record with the Cardinals (aside

The Browns have come *this close* to a Super Bowl five times. Not so for the Falcons, who have had little to shout about.

the closest the Lions have come.

Atlanta, on the other hand, has never been close. Since joining the NFL in '66, the Falcons have been to the playoffs only four times, and they've never advanced to the conference title game.

This season, Detroit and Atlanta didn't just take a couple steps back, they hit bottom. Detroit's offensive line was decimated by tragedy, and Barry Sanders was suddenly staring into peanut-sized holes. In Atlanta, Jerry Glanville's star-studded secondary had too much baseball on its mind (Brian Jordan, Deion Sanders), and just when

the Falcons looked as if they were in position to make a strong second-half run, quarterback Chris Miller went down with a season-ending knee injury.

Marty Schottenheimer and his former club, the Browns, know all about misfortune. Even now that he's coaching the Kansas City Chiefs, Schottenheimer still gets beat by Elway and the Broncos—usually in dramatic fashion. And when Elway led another last-minute rally to beat the Chiefs in their first meeting this year, it brought Schottenheimer's lifetime record against Denver to 1-9.

"I really don't want to try to evaluate it until my coaching career is over," Schottenheimer says. "Then I want to step back and figure out exactly how much money John Elway has cost me."

The ghosts indeed may have followed Schottenheimer from Cleveland to Kansas City, but that doesn't mean the Browns have been exorcised of their own demons. Three losses to the Broncos have kept the Browns out of three Super Bowls. And two of those losses were so remarkable they merited the special recognition of nicknames: Elway engineered "The Drive" in 1986, taking the Broncos 98 yards for the tying score before a field goal won the game for Denver in overtime, 23-20; and Jeremiah Castille recovered "The Fumble" a year later at the Denver 3-yard line, preserving a 38-33 Broncos win.

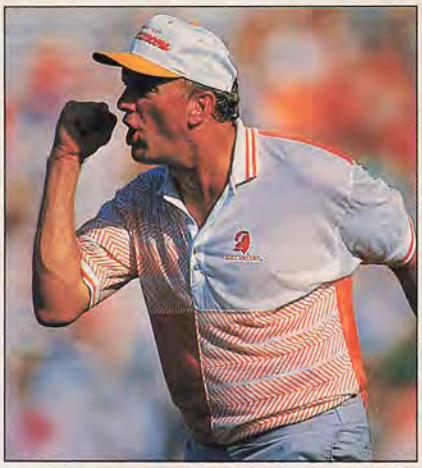
At least the back-to-back championship games that kept Cleveland out of the Super Bowl in 1968 and '69 weren't such heartbreakers. Baltimore beat the Browns 34-0 in 1968, and Minnesota beat them 27-7 in 1969.

Over in Seattle, it's ironic that this year's club—one of the organization's worst ever—has a coaching staff that is chock full of championship rings. Head coach Tom Flores is one of only two players in history to be part of a Super Bowl champion as a player (with the Chiefs in IV), as an assistant coach (Raiders in XI) and as head coach (Raiders, XV and XVIII). Defensive coordinator Tom Catlin played for the 1954 NFL-champion Browns. Receivers coach Bob Bratkowski won two NCAA national championships as an assistant at the University of Miami. Offensive-line coach Hudson Houck played for USC when the Trojans won the national title in 1962. Even offensive coordinator Larry Kennan can show off a ring from when his London Monarchs won the inaugural World League of American Football championship.

Dave Brown, now in his first season as defensive-backs coach, was an original Seahawk who played 11 years in Seattle. He was taken from Pittsburgh in the expansion draft following his rookie season in 1975, in which the Steelers won the Super Bowl.

"That was kind of what I thought was normal because I had been with championship teams all along," Brown says. "My high school team was 26-4 and my college team [Michigan] won 30 games, lost two and tied one. And then when I got to the pros we won the Super Bowl, so it wasn't really a big deal. It was kind of what I expected all along. And when I was chosen in the expansion draft by Seattle, it was just a total turnaround, something I've never experienced before."

The Seahawks made a swift rise to respectability as an expansion team. They took notice of Brown's Super Bowl ring and looked upon it as a source of motivation. They were also cognizant of Norm Evans' ring. Evans came to Seattle from Miami, where he was part of the Dolphins undefeated 1972 team. Coming into the NFL in 1976 with Tampa Bay, Seattle had its first winning season in 1978 and made it all the way to the AFC championship game in 1983. The Seahawks lost that game to the Raiders, however, and haven't made it that far since.



ALLEN DEAN STEELE

Coach Sam Wyche flexed his Super Bowl muscle with the Bengals. Can he do the same for the Bucs?

"I felt that in those first few years we had a lot of really good games where we played tough, we played hard," says Brown. "But still, we wanted to win the championship. That's really the bottom line. That's what we're working for."

Like Seattle, Tampa Bay has a coach, Sam Wyche, with Super Bowl experience. Before Wyche lost to San Francisco as head coach of the Bengals in Super Bowl XXIII, he was part of the 49ers' staff that knocked off the Bengals in Super Bowl XVII. How far can Wyche take a team that had won six or more games in a season just twice prior to this, its 17th year? The Bucs have made big strides this season but would appear a long way off from Super Bowl contention.

For Tampa Bay and the eight other teams who've never appeared in the Super Bowl, the quest continues.★

N O - S H O W S

TEAM	WILD CARDS	DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS	CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS
FALCONS	2-1	0-3	0-0
BROWNS	0-2	5-5	0-5
LIONS	0-1	1-2	0-1
OILERS	5-3	2-4	0-2
SAINTS	0-3*	0-0	0-0
CARDINALS	0-1	0-2	0-0
CHARGERS	1-0	2-2	0-2
SEAHAWKS	2-1	1-2	0-1
BUCCANEERS	0-1	1-1	0-1

*Saints won their first NFC West title last year but were designated a wild card team in the new playoff system.

"It's just a real bad atmosphere around there [Phoenix]. It's kind of a real drill-sergeant-type atmosphere. Everybody's real tight....It's just not a real family-oriented organization."

— former Cardinals safety Lonnie Young, now with the Jets

ILLUSTRATION BY JOE GOEBEL. TITLING PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BROWN PPC

FROM SHADY OWNERS AND SLIPPERY LAWYERS TO 18-HOUR BUS RIDES AND UNFULFILLED CONTRACTS, AMERICANS ENDURE NIGHTMARES PLAYING BASKETBALL IN EUROPE **BY DOUG CRESS**

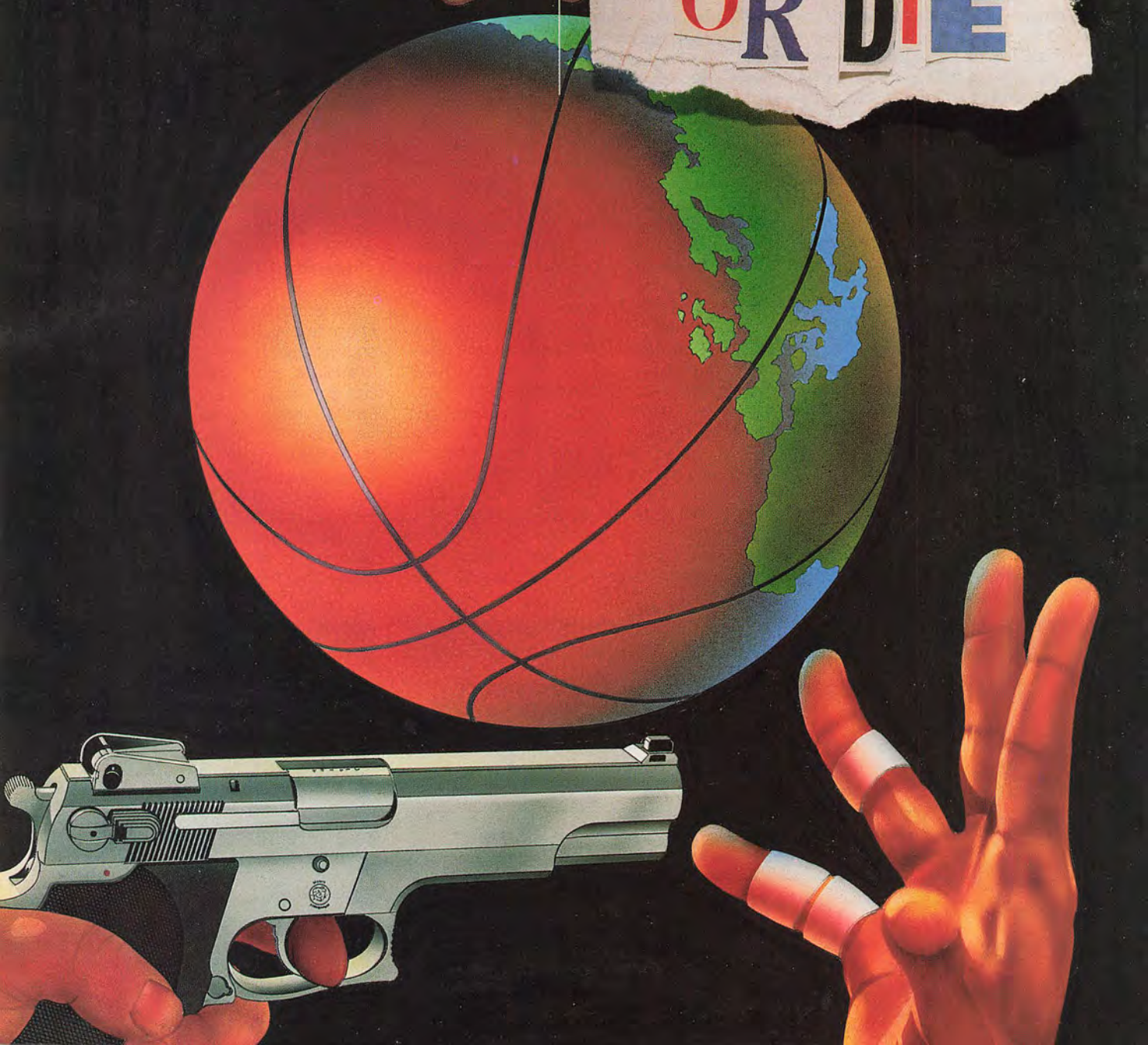
SHOOT OR DIE

The last paycheck Danny Vranes received from the AEK basketball team of Athens, Greece, had bounced. His electricity had been cut off for non-payment of bills, his kids had been kicked out of school for non-payment of fees, and the brand new Mercedes-Benz he'd been promised by the team turned out to be a nine-year-old Nissan compact.

Worse yet, Vranes, a former first-round draft pick of the Seattle SuperSonics who spent seven years in the NBA, had a hunch the AEK president was mixed up with organized crime.

"When I arrived, he gave me about 10,000 Greek drachmas [$1,000, U.S.] to cover my moving expenses," says Vranes. "But he gave me the money in cash, and it came in a plastic bag hidden underneath a lot of fruit. I figured right then something was up."

Vranes' experiences as an American basketball star playing in Europe during the 1988-89 season were not unique. From slippery lawyers to riotous fans to 18-hour bus rides to unfulfilled contracts, Americans continue to endure nightmare scenarios that neither the U.S. State Department nor Interpol can quite comprehend.



"Every American has a horror story over here," says center Mark McNamara, a seven-year NBA veteran who's played in Italy and Spain. "If you haven't had a problem, then you haven't played in Europe."

Says ex-Detroit Pistons coach Herb Brown: "I once had a team director in Spain tell me, 'Yeah, you've got an iron-clad contract. But you'll spend five to 10 years in Spanish courts if we don't decide to pay you."

Approximately 350 American basketball players were under contract to European clubs at the start of the 1991-92 season, ranging from Daryl Dawkins in Italy and Michael Brooks in France to Mike Mitchell in Israel and Michael Ray Richardson in Croatia. But with no international players association, few labor laws and many clubs struggling simply to stay afloat, let alone financially prosper, the opportunities for player abuse are everywhere.

Charles Grantham, president of the NBA Players Association, says he gets calls in his New York office every day from Americans in a jam overseas. He believes an international tribunal must be established to arbitrate and protect the rights of American players, especially if the game is to continue growing internationally.

"It's time to bring the European leagues into the modern world," Grantham says. "The teams in Italy and Spain and elsewhere must be made aware that these players are not cattle; they're human beings, and they should be treated as such. I'd compare this situation to the way the NBA was back in the early 1950s. From what I hear, the biggest problem is still getting paid."

True, money—or the lack thereof—appears to be the root of all basketball evil in Europe. But in Vranes' case, his personal situation included an element most are missing: violence. After accumulating only $20,000 in small cash payments over the course of the season (and being forced to launder most of that out of the country on the black market through Switzerland), Vranes did what any stranger in a strange land in a very strange situation would do: He quit AEK, put his wife and three children on the next plane back to the United States, and made plans to follow shortly thereafter.

Or so he thought.

"I went to say goodbye to a Greek friend of mine who was a stockbroker," Vranes says. "So we're sitting in his office talking, and all of a sudden these three goons come crashing through the door. They were the AEK president's bodyguards. One 300-pound guy is holding me, and the other two gorillas start beating up my friend. It was terrible, just awful. They really worked him over. Then they said that if I didn't play in the next game, a big Greek Cup game, I'd never see him again. And they dragged him out of the office screaming.

"I didn't know what to do. My friend was gone for a day, and then I got a phone call. It was him, pleading with me to play. He was hysterical. He was begging me to play. He said they were going to kill him if I didn't."

Vranes played in AEK's next game. "I had about 20 points," he says. "I remember hitting a big shot with about one minute to go and we won. But I can't tell you who we played or what the final score was. Obviously, I was a little preoccupied throughout the game. I was a zombie.

"Oh, and get this: After the game, the team president comes rushing out of the stands and tries to hug me. Can you believe it?"

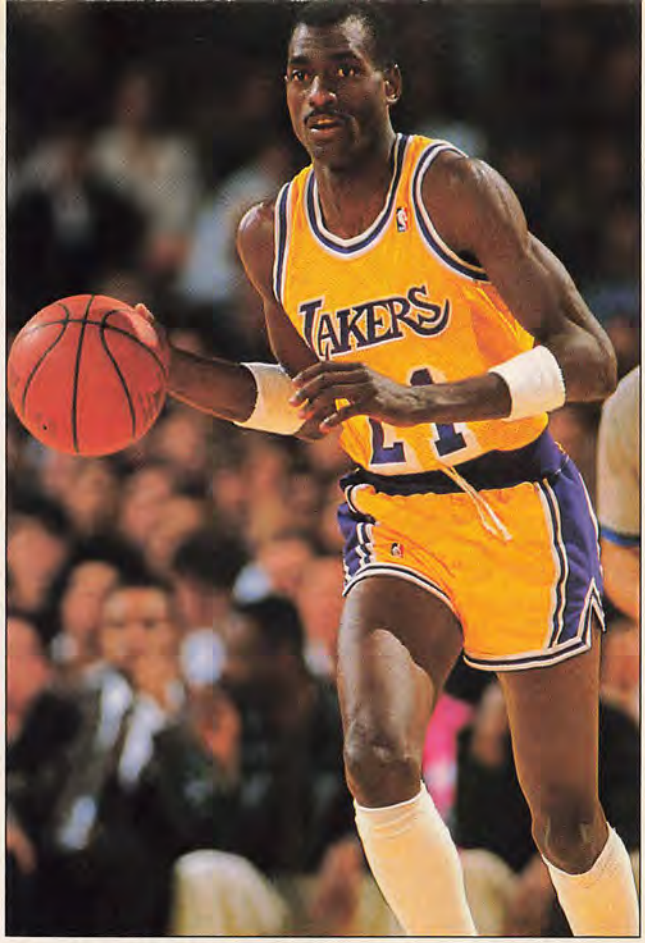
Vranes and American teammate Clint Richardson fled Greece on the very next plane out, carrying with them approximately $33,000 in cash stuffed into every jacket lining and trouser cuff imaginable.

Vranes' stockbroker friend was found the next day—alive, but worse for the wear. Interpol swept in and seized the team president, yet AEK remains one of the glamour teams of Europe.

And Vranes? He's now playing for Breeze Milan in the Italian League.

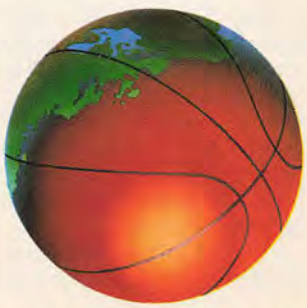
"I don't really have any problems in Italy," he says. "Sure, they pay late, but at least they pay. [Teammate] Adrian Dantley can't handle it though. He's Mr. Conservative, and stuff like late paychecks just makes him panic."

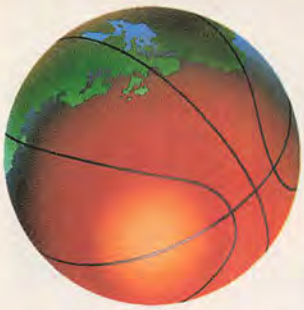
Unlike the NBA, where teams are required to post multimillion-dollar operating bonds before the season, most teams in Europe are run



ANDREW D. BERNSTEIN/NBA PHOTOS

Michael Cooper was sent packing after being blamed for Il Messaggero's playoff loss.





on a nickel-and-dime basis, at best. Many grew out of small neighborhood sporting clubs—YMCAs, really, and depend heavily on corporate sponsors for their cash flow. Factor in the inevitable front-office graft, mismanagement, and political infighting, and it's easy to see how American players, especially those on losing teams, get the shaft.

It once took ex-Portland Trail Blazers guard Jeff Lamp three years to get paid by his team, Rimini of Italy. When McNamara played for Unicaja Ronda of Spain, he naturally used the bank that sponsored the club; that is, until he realized the team was taking money directly out of his account for unspecified "fines." "After that, all the money went right under my mattress," McNamara says.

Then there's the L.A. Clippers' Stanley Roberts, who was fined $150,000 and had his contract rescinded by Real Madrid of Spain for missing two practices late in the 1990-91 season. One week later, Roberts was back in the United States for good. "It [was] an experience," Roberts says. "Would I do it again? No way."

The expectations placed on American players can be crippling. After running through a host of Americans in pursuit of the Italian championship—including the much-publicized acquisitions of Danny Ferry and Brian Shaw in 1989—Il Messaggero of Rome thought it finally had the answer in ex-Laker Michael Cooper in 1990. But even though Cooper had the best season of his life, he was blamed for the team's semifinal exit from the playoffs and was sent packing.

"It doesn't matter what kind of season you had as long as you win in the end," Cooper says. "I mean, we had an exceptional team—the best since they won the championship in 1983. But the minute we lost in the playoffs, everybody started saying it was a bad season. Everybody started pointing fingers."

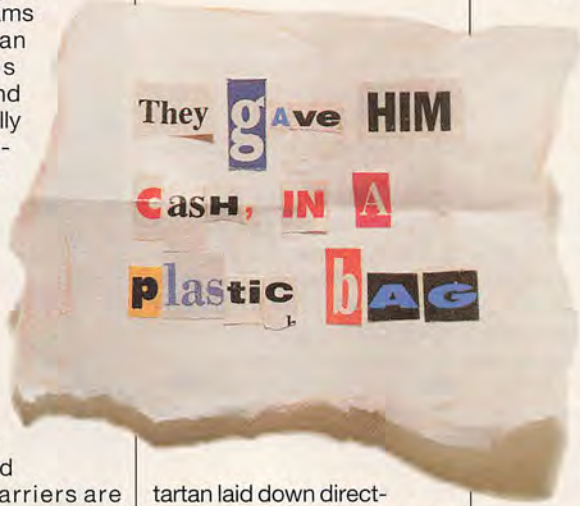
As a rule, players who sign with teams in major European cities such as Rome, Munich and Barcelona generally have fewer problems adjusting to foreign ball. Those cities are more sophisticated. There is a McDonalds or a Pizza Hut on practically every corner, *USA Today* is available at every newsstand, and the language barriers are more easily broken down. Most importantly, there is a U.S. consulate nearby if the going gets too tough.

But those unfortunate to have to play with teams out in the hinterland can find life trying. Or deadly. When McNamara came down with typhoid fever while playing with Unicaja Ronda in 1986-87, he found the medical care available in the southern Spanish port of Malaga to be, well, medieval.

"I was totally out of it," McNamara says. "I had to be hospitalized, but I remember I had all these IVs and machines hooked up to me, and the doctor who comes over to look at me is smoking. He's *smoking!* Then he's saying stuff like, 'You can't be that sick, you're just tired.' This guy's puffing away, and I'm dying of typhoid fever.

"Finally, the ashes on his cigarette start falling on my chest as he's examining me and they're burning me, and he's not wiping them off. At this point, I'm delirious. I'm out of my mind. Then my roommate, John Devereaux, comes back from checking out the rest of the hospital and says there are rats and cockroaches in the kitchen. He said that back home they would've closed it down."

Not even the game of basketball itself is much solace for Americans abroad. First off, few arenas in Europe are on a par with small college gymnasiums, let alone NBA-style stadiums. Often, the basketball floor is linoleum or tartan laid down directly over concrete—can you say "tendinitis?"—and the timekeeper, the scorekeeper and even the referees are wildly unreliable. Even the opposition is not to be trusted.



Earlier in that fateful season with AEK, Vranes says, a European Cup game against a Soviet team was bought and paid for long before the opening tip.

"The AEK owners just came into the locker room before the game and said, 'It's OK, everything is taken care of,'" Vranes says. "They paid $10,000 to the Soviet team, and this was with guys like Arvidas Sabonis and Rimas Kurtinaitis, and they threw the game. They'd done it before, you could tell; they were throwing balls out of bounds and missing easy shots. We won by 20 points."

Nor are the fans much help, even if you're winning. Most courts in Europe are surrounded by tall plexiglass or chain-link barriers to keep the fans in

ANDREW D. BERNSTEIN/NBA PHOTOS

Disgruntled fans threw batteries and heated coins at George Gervin when he failed to work miracles.

their place, and the players enter and exit the court via long, retractable tunnels that shield them from thrown objects. The police with riot gear and fire hoses standing nearby are not there for show.

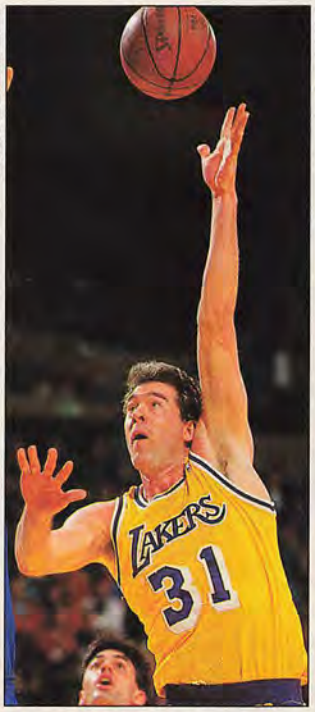
When former NBA All-Star George Gervin failed to work miracles with TDK Manresa of Spain in 1989-90, the fans pelted him with heated coins and radio batteries. Others have been bombarded with whiskey bottles—hard liquor is sold at all stadiums—firecrackers, or lit traffic flares, and even a homecourt victory celebration can get out of hand.

Some places, however, are just plain depressing. George Singleton, a former Furman star who was drafted by the Los Angeles Lakers in 1984, has split the last eight years between Spain and Italy. Nothing, he says, has compared to the Spanish League's decision to hold the 1985 all-star game in...Portugal.

"Don't ask me why," Singleton says. "There wasn't a team from the Spanish League in Portugal then, and there never has been. And it was a little tiny pueblo too. But they just told all us players to gather in Madrid, and then we rode a bus like eight hours to this little town—I can't even remember the name—to play the game. It was in the middle of nowhere, and this little gym only had stands on one side.

"They had the slam dunk contest, the three-point shooting contest and the game all in the same day, but everybody was too tired to play well. It turns out that the little town was where they held it because it bid the most money. That's the way it was then."

But it's not just American *players* that have it rough in Europe—American coaches suffer too. SuperSonics coach George Karl has twice been forced out at Real Madrid—the second time last season for the crimes of an 18-7 record and failing to learn Spanish—while Herb Brown has seen it all in a 19-year career that includes stops in Puerto Rico, Israel and Spain.

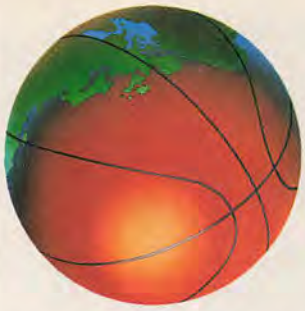


JON SOOHOO/NBA PHOTOS

Mark McNamara was hospitalized for typhoid fever, but his doctor insisted he was just tired.

"I'll never forget being fired by Joventut [of Spain] in 1990 with us in first place and the team in the semifinals of the Korac Cup," Brown says, referring to one of several major European tournaments. "It turns out my assistant coach, who was also my translator, was translating everything the wrong way. He wanted my job, so he was twisting everything I said to the press around all wrong, making me look bad, like I didn't care if we won or lost.

"Finally, my wife, who speaks fluent Spanish, noticed one morning when she was reading the paper. But by then, the damage had been done."★



Doug Cress is a free-lance writer based in Spain.

IF YOU THINK EUROPE'S TOUGH...

Aside from an out-and-out war zone, there's probably no more dangerous place to live and work than Bogota, Colombia. This is a capital city so scary that its leading hotel will transport jogger guests in armed caravans to a local school track, where they can run with the protection of machine-gun wielding guards.

David Everett went there in 1989 to play basketball for the city's team, Icollantas. "The first thing that comes to mind is danger," says the 28-year-old, who played for the Fort Wayne Fury in the CBA. "It was rough. They were doing a lot of [politically] motivated killing."

Drug syndicates have killed three anti-drug presidential candidates, a minister of justice and countless journalists, judges and policemen in recent years. Everett felt especially vulnerable because the drug lords resent the United States' efforts to stop the illicit trade, and they've expressly threatened Americans.

He had no idea what Colombia was like. The 6-foot-11 forward/center from Gould, Arkansas, ended up in Bogota after a basketball career that began at Scottsdale JC in Arizona and went on to include stints at Arizona State, Marquette and Hawaii-Pacific.

His expectations were simple: "You're from the States, you can play ball, you go there, put on a show and come back. Get some experience."

He got lots. The hotel room adjacent to Everett's blew up during his first week in the country. "The drug lords were looking for someone who snitched on them," says Everett, "and he happened to be in the next room. The cops thought it was a good place [to hide]—that's the reason *we* were there—and it wasn't.

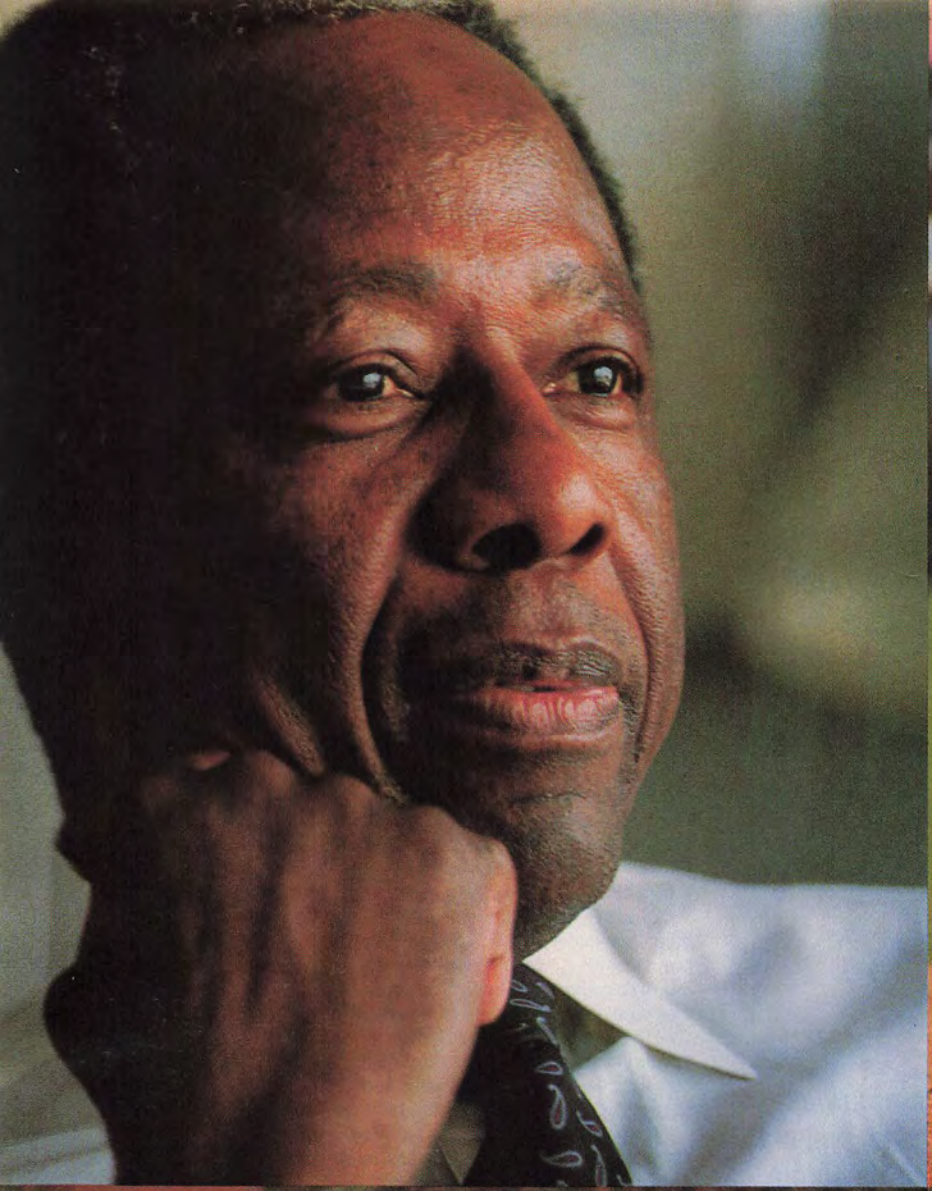
"I didn't know [the situation] until the room blew up, because I didn't know Spanish. I didn't know what they were talking about on the news, and I was basically either isolated in my room, at practice or at the game."

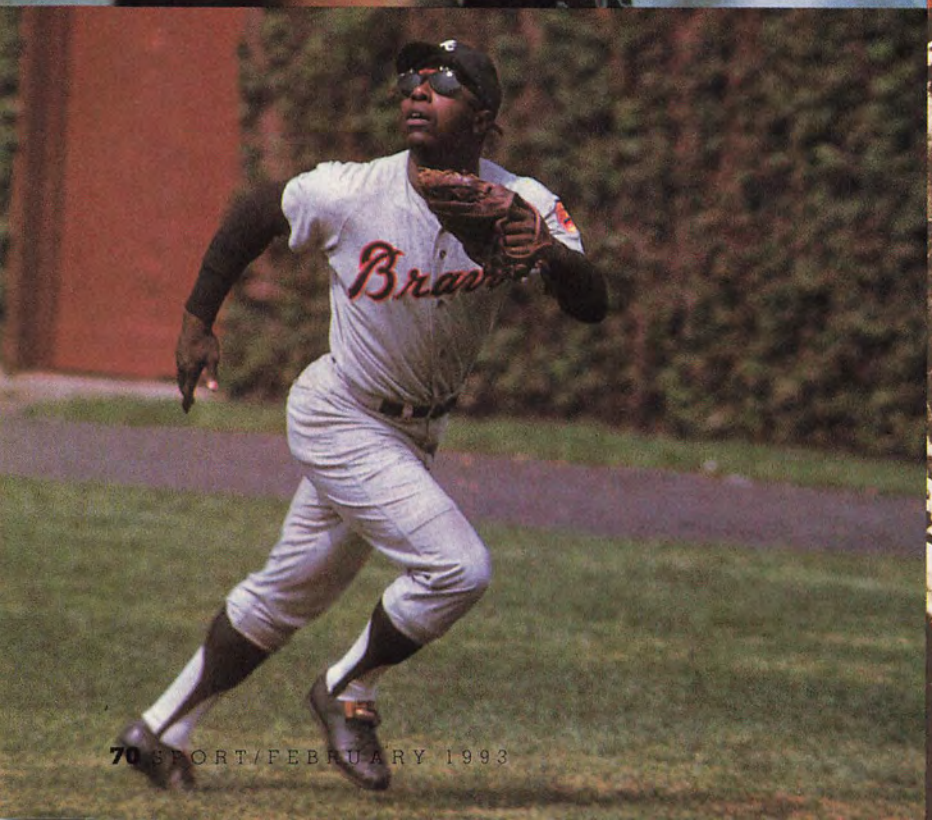
Once, when he did go out, the sense of terror was indelibly reinforced after a stroll with a teammate. "We were walking down the street and [my teammate] was shot," says Everett, of a gun battle that caught them in the crossfire. "He got shot in the hand. Everyone took off running, and he was just standing there screaming." Everett got him settled down and they ran like hell themselves.

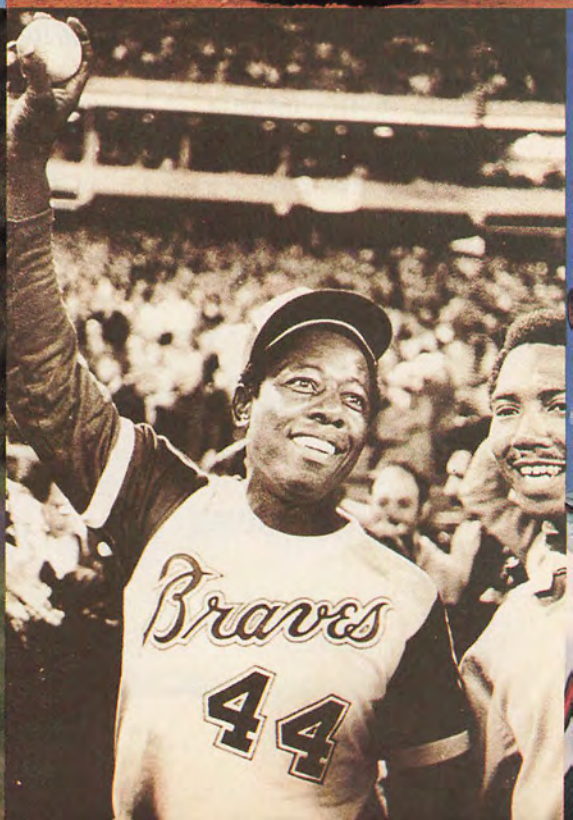
Soon after, Everett left Colombia. He'd had enough in two long months of worry. He was tired of hiding, of the necessity for the team to move every week because of the fear of attack by violent fans of their opponents. He was fed up with dodging bottles thrown from the stands when Bogota was winning on the road. But even leaving was dangerous; the team didn't want him to go. A friend at the American Embassy helped him sneak out of the country.

"I had to not tell anyone because they would leak it out to the press," he says. He feared an assassination attempt at the airport, and he wasn't fully relieved until he landed in the United States. "They could've put a bomb on the plane...anything....People always say, 'I kissed the ground,' but I didn't. I kissed the plane."

—Carl Grody



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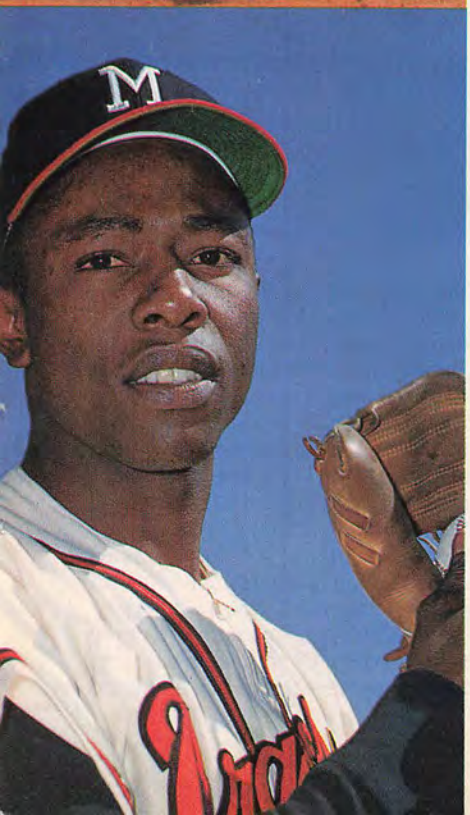


HANK AARON

"I HATE THE WAY BASEBALL HAS TREATED MINORITIES. IT HAS THE WORST TRACK RECORD IN SPORTS."

THE SPORT Q&A MAGAZINE

When the Atlanta Braves made their most recent bid for a championship, there was at least one Atlantan who was hoping the Blue Jays would be the Braves' competition in the World Series: Hank Aaron. He wanted the Blue Jays to be there for one simple reason. Their manager, Cito Gaston, is a black man.

After Aaron retired from baseball and moved into the Braves' front office, he became baseball's most outspoken critic on matters concerning race and minority hiring. It is these issues that have prompted Aaron to want to become baseball's next commissioner.

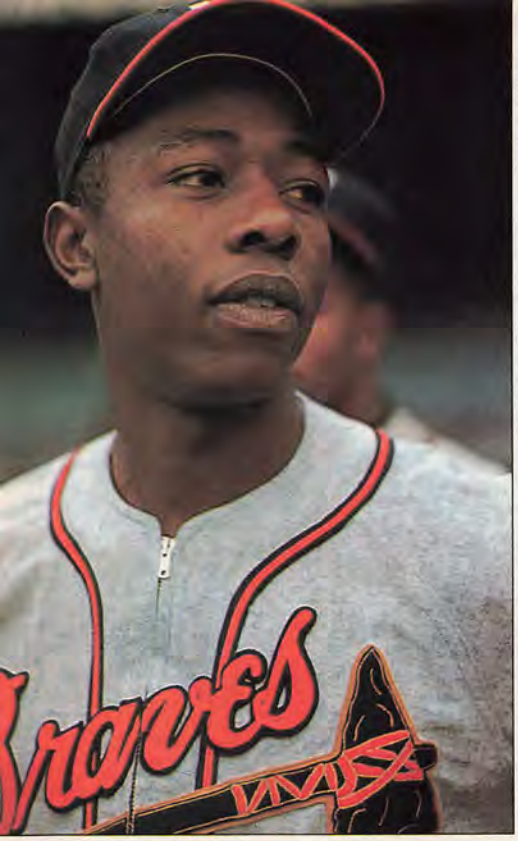
While he was always aware of racial inequities and conflict, the issues came to a head in the latter days of his career. As he approached Babe Ruth's home run record, he was besieged with death threats and hate mail. What should have been one of the great periods of his life was tainted with inhuman ugliness. Fighting the game's racism has become his crusade.

Last year, he initiated the Braves' Career Initiative Project, an internship program that gives African-Americans and Hispanics opportunities to work in a front office. "The reason I started it," he says, "is because most baseball owners agreed with Al Campanis when he said blacks lack the necessities to work in the front office. My program will [get rid of the excuses]."

Aaron's achievements on the playing field were incomparable. As a member of the Braves and Milwaukee Brewers, he became the all-time major-league leader in home runs (755) and RBI (2,297) before retiring from the game in 1976. But his success didn't stop there. Aaron played a key role in building up a Braves franchise that has made back-to-back appearances in the World Series. Several blue-chip players on the current roster—including David Justice, Ron Gant and Tom

ACTION PHOTOS: SPORT ARCHIVE. PORTRAIT PHOTO: MARLENE KARAS/ATLANTA CONSTITUTIONAL JOURNAL

BY WILLIAM LADSON



SPORT ARCHIVE

For 21 years, Aaron was the heart and soul of the Milwaukee/Atlanta Braves.

Glavine—came up through the organization's farm system during Aaron's 13-year tenure as the Braves' director of player development.

Currently, Aaron is vice president of Turner Private Networks, Inc. and couldn't be happier. But although Aaron is no longer directly involved with baseball, he has much to say about it, and it's all provocative.

SPORT: Let's talk about the problems *you* have with baseball. What's bothering you these days?

AARON: I hate the way baseball has treated minorities. It has the worst track record in sports. Take the Florida Marlins. They have been totally out of line when it comes to minority hiring. For example, they interviewed Chris Chambliss for the managerial job last September, but it was nothing more than window dressing. He has a winning record and he's good for young kids. He would be excellent for a franchise.

[The Marlins] got angry with me. They are going to milk minorities for every damn thing they got. If they do hire minorities, they're probably going to have them rake the leaves. If [the Marlins] want to do the right thing, they can go hire a black doctor or someone in charge of stadium operations. Don't give me that explanation that they are trying to hire the best person. There are plenty of [qualified blacks available].

SPORT: You can't force a team to hire minorities.

AARON: But it's basically right to hire blacks and Hispanics. Henry Aaron, Jackie Robinson and Willie Mays made their marks on the field. That alone should give us a chance in the front office. We deserve a chance just as much as Stan Musial and Ted Williams. Baseball gave Williams a managerial job even though he couldn't fill out a lineup card. When Stan Musial got out of baseball, the St. Louis Cardinals gave him a general manager's position.

[I want the owners] to give minorities the same chance they gave us when they said that we couldn't play. Jackie Robinson proved them wrong in 1947, and we can prove them wrong now. Why do you think I had my fingers crossed hoping that Cito Gaston would be in the World Series? The Toronto Blue Jays have been threatening to kick him out of the game for the last three years. Why do I have to worry about some black player worried about becoming a manager?'

SPORT: You have been doing most of the talking regarding minority issues in baseball. Do you think it's time for other blacks to speak up?

AARON: Every single black person should speak up. Unfortunately, the Barry Bondses and the Bobby Bonillas are not going to say anything. But these guys have to look in the mirror every single night and realize that no matter how much soap they put on their face, they are still black.

When Arthur Ashe said it was easier for him to have AIDS than to be black, I knew exactly what he meant. It doesn't matter how prominent blacks are, they are always going to face discrimination.

SPORT: How do you think Bill White was treated as the National League president?

AARON: Unfortunately, Fay Vincent was not cordial to him. When Bill White tried to make a decision, Vincent went over his head. All Vincent cared about was Bill throwing out the first ball at a game.

SPORT: Did White tell you what he went through as the National League president?

AARON: He didn't have to tell me what he went through. I know what every black person in this country goes through. Every one of them faces discrimination.

"Nothing surprises me. I condone a lot of what I see. When I see blacks stealing, I understand what made them steal...."

SPORT: Minority hiring hasn't increased that much since Al Campanis made his racial remarks in 1987. Why not?

AARON: Unfortunately, Afro-Americans don't control the press. The major newspapers are owned by whites. They really don't care about minority issues. When the Campanis statement came out, it was big news on Tuesday, but it wasn't worth a shit on Thursday. Your sportswriters control what they put in the paper. I mean, what do they care? Most of them are white...[they say], 'I'm white, and I can do what I want to do.

Nothing surprises me. I condone a lot of what I see. When I see blacks stealing, I understand what precipitated, what made them steal or do something out of the ordinary. A lot of white people say they're wrong to commit a crime. You're damn right they're wrong. But isn't it wrong for most blacks to be born in poverty? I blame all that on racism. I would say that 75 percent of black [crime] is committed because of racism. What other means do they have to survive? When white people see a black person in poverty, they think he's a bum. Of course he's a bum, because they never gave him a chance

but to be a bum.

SPORT: Do you still face discrimination?

AARON: Constantly. It happened in Pittsburgh during the 1992 playoffs. I was watching the game with Ted [Turner], Jane [Fonda] and a host of employees from CNN. A lot of the white spectators wanted my autograph. I told them I wasn't signing. Some guy in the stands decided to insult me in front of everybody. He said, 'Sign the goddamn thing, bum.' He didn't say that to Ted and Jane when they refused to sign. The only reason he said it is because I was black. I was so angry that I left the ballpark.

Last spring training I was in a restaurant in West Palm Beach. The hostess sat me down near six white women. When they saw me, they picked their pocketbooks off the floor and put them on their laps. They feared that I was going to rob them. I'm getting angry at this point. Suddenly, they find out that I'm Henry Aaron and they want my autograph. Obviously, I didn't give it to them.

SPORT: After Fay Vincent resigned as commissioner of baseball, you made it known that you wanted to be his successor. Why are you qualified for the job?

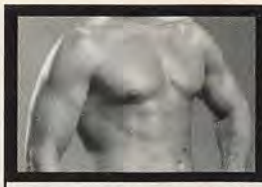
AARON: I'm as qualified as any commissioner baseball has hired in the past. I played this game, and that should be enough. I'm not going to tell you that I know every financial problem that baseball has, but I'll get the job done. Fay Vincent was a nice guy, but he wasn't a commissioner. I think he's good for the board of directors of Coca-Cola, but that's about it. He's not a commissioner of baseball.

SPORT: Do you think the owners would ever consider you for the commissioner's job?

AARON: There's no chance in hell that I'll convince the owners that I'm qualified to be commissioner. Let's face it, I'm a black man. But I'm not going to worry about it. I'm going to continue to voice my views on baseball.

SPORT: If you were commissioner, how would you deal with baseball's mounting problems? Let's start with realignment.

AARON: First of all, I wouldn't try to realign four National League teams like Vincent tried to do. You have to remem-



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THE NEW DODGE
A DIVISION OF THE CHRYSLER CORPORATION

TOM DIPACE

Aaron (chatting with Braves manager Bobby Cox) isn't smiling these days, because of baseball's negligent treatment of minorities.

ber that the Braves and the Reds are two of the strongest clubs in the Western Division. If you take them out of the division, other clubs will no longer have a drawing card. The solution is to have interleague play. When teams are out of the pennant race, fans will have the privilege of seeing stars in the other league.

SPORT: What would you do about salary escalation?

AARON: You can't stop the superstars from making great money. However, utility players and middle relievers should not be making millions of dollars. They should make no more than $100,000. I would also give them a three-percent raise every year. That's it. You have some guy that wins four ball games making over a million dollars. That's ridiculous. That's why I say that you have to put a cap on these salaries. For example, I would allow every team to spend a maximum of $23 million on players. If they want to spend most of it on one person, that's their business. A salary cap would allow small markets like Pittsburgh and Milwaukee to survive.

SPORT: Would Pete Rose be reinstated if you were commissioner?

AARON: First of all, Pete was wrong for betting on baseball. However, what he did was nothing compared to other players enshrined in Cooperstown. Baseball didn't punish Ty Cobb for being a racist. It's time for baseball to clean up its own act and say 'Pete Rose paid his debt. He belongs in Cooperstown like everybody else.' The government found Pete guilty [of tax evasion] and he paid for it by spending three months in prison. So if [society] is satisfied, I think baseball should say, hey it's over with, and they should induct the man into Cooperstown, like yesterday.

> "I'm as qualified as any commissioner baseball has hired in the past. I played this game, and that should be enough."

SPORT: How would you avoid a lockout?

AARON: Granted, the owners and the players are in this game to make

money, but they must find a way to get the fans, especially the kids, back to the ballpark. For example, a family of four spends almost a week's salary to attend a game. That's insane. The players and the owners have to take that into consideration and stop being so greedy.

SPORT: The television contract with baseball is about to expire. What would you do about it?

AARON: I don't think that the networks are going to be able to save baseball. They took a bath last time. I think that cable television is the only way to save baseball. If I'm going to dish out dollars like they did, I want to have exclusive rights on everything. I don't want to have WGN, TBS and ESPN carrying games all over the world. [CBS] gave baseball a lot of money and then allowed other people the leeway to do whatever they wanted to do. Why would I want to watch [the network] when I have ESPN on an everyday basis?

SPORT: You have been very outspoken since you retired in 1976. Are you surprised that the major-league owners haven't tried to silence you?

AARON: No. The only reason they haven't tried is because of the tremendous home run record that I have. It would be a public-relations disaster to have a man with 755 home runs unemployed. Besides, I'm not saying anything that's hurting baseball. When I say something about baseball, the facts are in black and white. I'm also lucky that I work for a liberal-minded person like Ted Turner.

SPORT: How come you didn't speak about minority issues during your playing days?

AARON: First of all, I'm not a Johnny-come-lately. I was talking about these issues when I was a ballplayer. When I had 50 career home runs, the press didn't write about my feelings. After you hit 755 home runs, you tend to have clout with the media.

SPORT: Are you bitter toward baseball?

AARON: Hell no. I'm not a man who is looking for revenge. I'm a long way from being a defeated person. I've accomplished a lot during my years in baseball.

SPORT: In your autobiography, *If I Had a Hammer*, you come across as being bitter toward the game. You spend so many chapters on the racism you faced as you approached Babe Ruth's home run record.

AARON: That's true, but I'm still not bitter toward baseball. A lot of white people want me to say that I'm bitter toward the game. If you read all the articles that are written about me these days, you would think that I'm a bitter man.

SPORT: You don't receive much credit for helping build the Braves into pennant winners. Doesn't that bother you?

AARON: I'm not here to toot my own horn. It wasn't only me that helped turn the Braves around. Most of the credit should go to [former director of scouting] Paul Snyder. He's the one who discovered the Tom Glavines and the Dave Justices. When [the new regime] took over in 1991, you knew it wasn't going to give credit to [Snyder]. But that's all right. Enough people know who developed those players. People that know baseball realize that there's no way that [general manager John Schuerholtz] can come and turn a team around in one year.

SPORT: According to insiders, the Braves fired you as director of player development. True?

AARON: That's not true. I left on my own. I was bored with the job. I've never been fired in my life.

SPORT: For the record, who's the best player in baseball today?

AARON: If I had a chance to build a championship team, I would start with Ken Griffey Jr. and Roberto Alomar. Not only do they have the talent, they also have the brains to be the best at their positions.

SPORT: Is there a slugger who has a chance to break your home run and RBI records?

AARON: I don't think so. My records are here to stay. I don't think today's players are willing to play 23 years like I did. With the money that they make these days, they can retire at the age of 32. Why damage your body when you don't have to? There's no reason to break records as long as you are financially secure. The only reason I played as long as I did was because I needed the money.★

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Last fall, after Hurricane Andrew had blown through the Caribbean and reconfigured the Florida landscape, an exhibition game between the Miami Heat and Chicago Bulls was arranged to raise funds on behalf of relief efforts. At the announcement of the event, none other than the Bulls' Michael Jordan predicted that the upstart Heat would soon replace the Bulls at the top of the NBA hierarchy. Nice, meaningless words, right? The superstar selling some tickets by dropping a few condescending words on a hopeless aspirant.

Just the same, Heat forward Glen Rice exploited the compliment and quipped: "It might be sooner than you think. We're a young team and we're hungry right now. And I think as long as we keep that type of attitude, we can be like the Bulls."

Fat chance, you're thinking? The prospect isn't as absurd as you might believe. This is a franchise that has already defied conventional wisdom to such an extent that it's developing a reputation as the textbook example of an expansion team that does everything right. Virtually every game is a sellout, and in just its fourth season last year, the Heat made it all the way to the playoffs to confront none other than the Bulls.

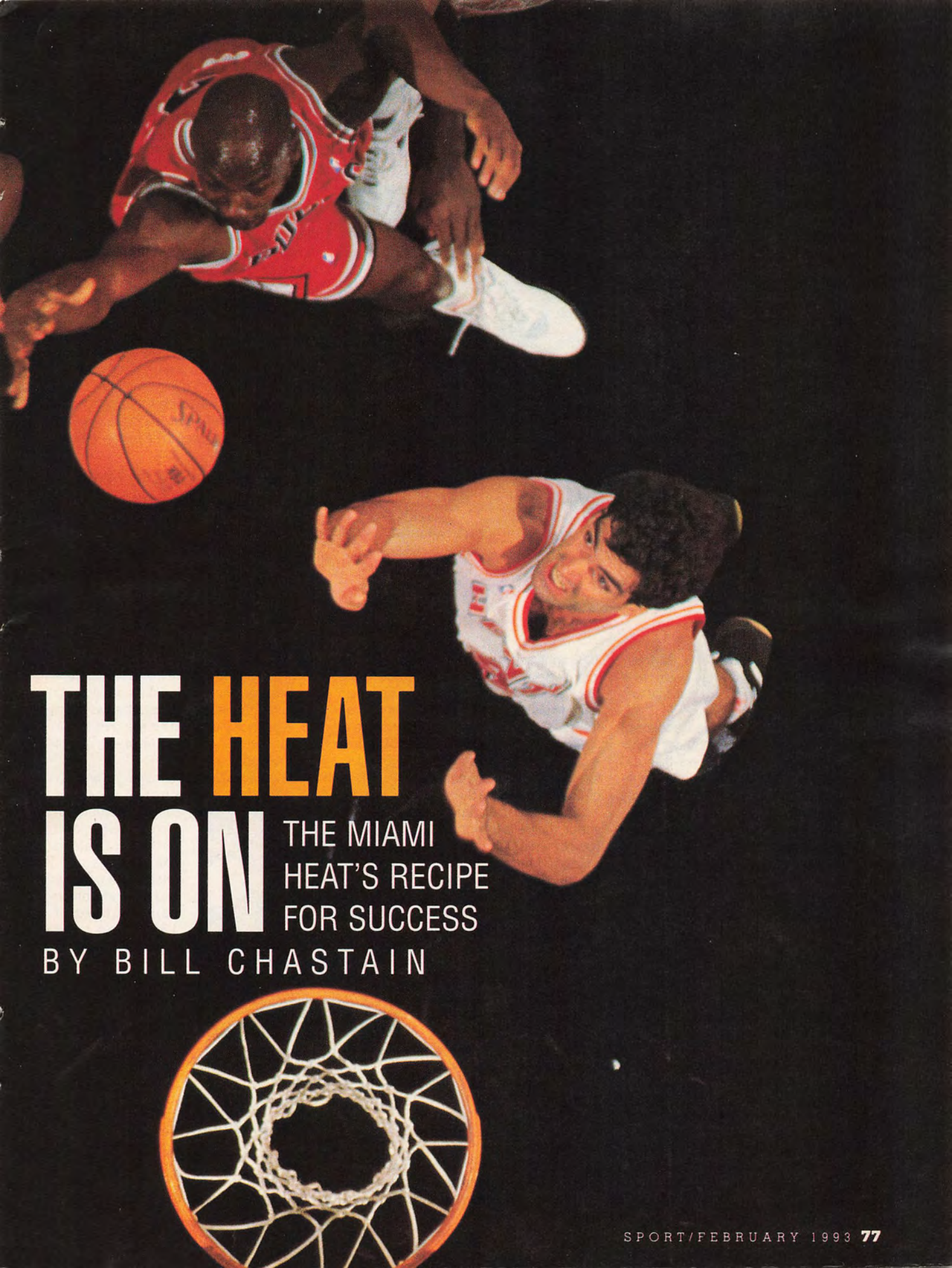
"That was exciting," Rice says. "It gave us a chance to realize how talented we were. Getting into the playoffs was a great experience for us, playing the best team in the league at this point. Hopefully, we're going to be in the playoffs again this year. I think we'll be a much better team."

The Heat organization is infused with credibility from top to bottom, and the still-maturing franchise has succeeded against daunting odds. The local market, the history, the demographics—all suggested a tough sell. The story begins in the mid-'80s, when the leadership of a resurgent NBA envisioned room for further success. Along with Miami, franchises were also granted to Charlotte, Orlando and Minnesota, the two-year expansion plan allowing for Miami and Charlotte to begin play in the 1988-89 season, with Orlando and Minnesota starting the following year.

Onetime schoolyard playmates Billy Cunningham and Lewis Schaffel were the men most responsible for acquiring the Miami franchise and running the team. Cunningham, a former title-winning player and coach with the Philadelphia 76ers, and Schaffel, a former NBA player agent, had the idea of trying to land a team and went after the dream.

Ted Arison, founder of Carnival Cruise Lines, and Zev Bufman, a theatrical producer,

AL MESSERSCHMIDT/S. FLORIDA IMAGES



THE HEAT IS ON

THE MIAMI HEAT'S RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

BY BILL CHASTAIN

signed on with the project, and the dream became reality on April 22, 1987, when the NBA officially welcomed the Heat into the league.

There was just one little snag for everyone along the way, though, courtesy of NBA commissioner David Stern: Each franchise had to sell 10,000 season tickets before opening its doors. Miami reached the required season-ticket total in late 1987, almost a year before its first regular-season game. Pauline Winick, the executive vice president of the Heat and the second highest-placed woman executive in the league, now says the demand was a blessing.

"I think we were lucky that our commissioner made it so tough," Winick says. "It was a lot of season tickets, but the challenge went out to Miami."

Miami met it, but Winick says there were other major obstacles. First, Florida had never shown enthusiasm for basketball. Miami once had a team—the old ABA's Floridians—that folded because of a lack of interest. Yet, the wanna-be front office was still confident that the city of Miami would warm up to the Heat.

"Charlotte always knew that when they opened the door, [fans] would flock in because it was a basketball mecca," Winick says. "But in Miami, we had a lot of Latin Americans, and they liked baseball but would never be interested in basketball." At least, that was the thinking.

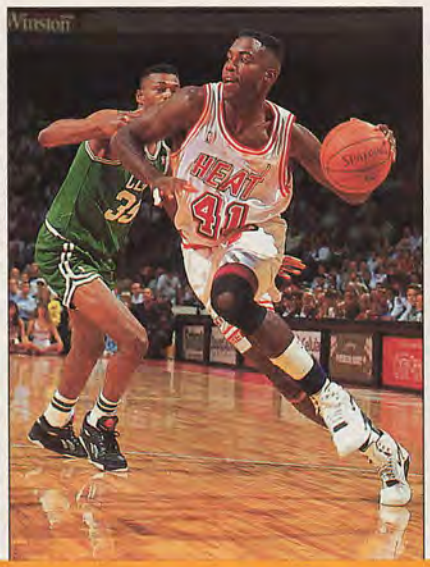
Then there was the perceived problem of Miami Arena, where the Heat plays. It was plunked down in the midst of a less-than-desirable part of the city. Camela's House, for instance, is a soup kitchen a half-block away that feeds the homeless.

"It was clearly an underserved neighborhood in Miami," says Winick. "The fear was that people would be afraid to come here."

Winick also cites the reputation of Miami's fans, who have at times provided the Dolphins and Hurricanes with mediocre support even when those teams have done well. "Even though [the Hurricanes] were national champions three times within a decade," she says, "they didn't always sell out the games. We weren't particularly comfortable. How were we going to keep people's interest? But we've redefined conventional wisdom."

Yes, good fortune has seemingly followed this franchise from the beginning, but the influence of Schaffel and Cunningham cannot be overemphasized. "The first step," Cunningham says of building the team, "was the decision not to go with older players, for the simple reason that we had to be bad before we could be good. And we felt like we'd have to utilize the draft initially. We knew we'd take our lumps early. And we'd have to have patience and live through some tough times and hopefully not make many mistakes when we got to the draft."

The Heat snagged 6-foot-11 Syracuse center Rony Seikaly with its first choice in the 1988 draft, and in succeeding years selected marquee players Glen Rice, Willie Burton and Steve Smith. The Heat's selections have paid off, and last May, after the team improved from 24-58 during the '90-91 campaign to 38-44 last year, it became the first of the four expansion teams to make the playoffs. Unfortunately, the Heat's opponent in the best-of-five series was the Bulls.



AL MESSERSCHMIDT/S. FLORIDA IMAGES

Glen Rice exemplifies the Heat's success through the draft.

"We don't want to just become a good team but to have a chance to win a world championship." —*Billy Cunningham, owning partner*

Following the predicted script, the Bulls took the first two games in Chicago before going to Miami Arena. The fourth-year Heat came armed with enthusiasm, if not a prayer, and good-naturedly suffered a third, series-ending loss.

By making the playoffs, the Heat was denied a lottery pick in the draft, but Cunningham contends that the experience of losing to the Bulls—despite some huge blowouts—was immeasurably more valuable to the young team than high draft picks.

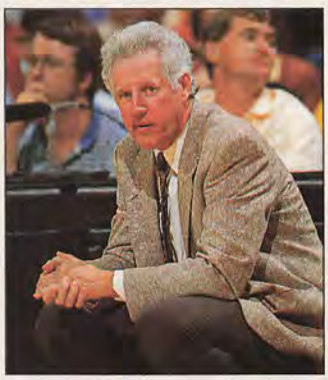
"The experience you gain as a player getting to the playoffs forces your goals to change," Cunningham says. "It was an important step. Players come into training camp with the goal of getting back to the playoffs. You could see its effects in the off-season. The players were focused."

While he doesn't downplay the challenges the Heat will face this year, Cunningham says there will be a key difference: "It's a team coming in knowing they can get into the playoffs instead of not being sure of what they can achieve."

Add to the mix Harold Miner and John Salley, and you have the potential for a dramatically improved team. Dubbed "Baby Jordan" for his creative one-on-one moves as a player at USC, Miner was surprisingly still around when the Heat drafted 12th in the first round. Forward/center John Salley, who played on Detroit's back-to-back championship teams in '88-89 and '89-90, joined the club in a trade.

Heat coach Kevin Loughery says the additions were made to order: "[Calling Miner 'Baby Jordan'], that's a little bit unfair for anybody to live up to—Michael's the best to ever play the game. But we were very lucky to get Harold. He has a chance to be a star—make a real impact.

"It's a situation where we had a nice season last year, and we had plans on improving our club. John Salley was just what we needed. When you see what he's added to our starting lineup...he'll bring a lot of shot blocks and rebounds."


BILL FRAKES/S FLORIDA IMAGES

Lofty standards have been set: Coach Loughery's Heat must rise again to the playoffs.

Salley joins the Heat at a stage reminiscent of when he joined the Pistons. Detroit had a good nucleus to contend for the championship when Salley and Dennis Rodman came aboard in 1986, and they helped push the team over the top a couple of years later. Salley sees himself in a similar situation but in a different role.

"Now I'm sort of like Bill Laimbeer was six years ago," Salley says. "I hope to bring the same kind of leadership qualities.

"First, you've got to build an attitude. We've got 41 home games, and [teammates]

have to realize you have to win all your games at home. They've got to take the attitude, 'This is *our* home court,' not like, 'Oh, that's the Chicago Bulls we're playing.'"

Critics of the Heat often point to its lack of a "true big man" as a possible hindrance for advancing to the later stages of the playoffs. Seikaly and Salley—tall but not beefy—could be better defined as contemporary big men.

"It has been a concern of ours," Rice says. "We lack size, which hurts us when we try to be aggressive about going in there and rebounding. In a long game, you're going to need somebody to get in there and pound the boards, knock some of the energy out of your opponents. That's happened to us in the past where we were outrebounded."

But Salley says views are changing in regard to how a big man is defined: "There are different big men these days. The whole game has sped up. Now you've got big men doing everything. Running the floor, rebounding, making the outlet pass, or shooting from outside. You can look around the league at the teams that are winning, and the classic big man isn't really a must anymore."

Rice says the acquisition of Salley sent a positive signal to the team. "[Management has] impressed, not only on our minds but on other people's minds, that they're going to take a young team and go from there," Rice says. "With the addition of Salley, it's really showing that the ownership takes an interest in winning. The character he has as a person, he fits in with our program. He's a winner and he's had a taste of NBA championship."

Funny how times change. The season before last, the Heat won 29 percent of its games. Now the team talks about championships.

The fans love it, and they were loyal even in the lean days. While to no one's surprise, last season's playoff game sold out the15,008 seat Miami Arena, attendance was shockingly high early in the season as well, following the team's dismal '90-91 record. The average attendance over the first four years has been 14,982, and there are 13,000 season-ticket holders. The early misgivings about little support for basketball and fear of Miami Arena's neighborhood turned out to be unwarranted.

Winick recalls the upscale crowd at the first Heat game. "It was amazing," she says. "The demographics of our season-ticket holders exceed the American Express profile, which is extraordinary. I see all these people coming to the games, and I know we broke the code for downtown Miami. I demand we take the credit."

Whatever doubts fans had about the neighborhood were initially overcome by the excitement of the new team, and after people discovered that their fears were unfounded, they stayed with the program.

According to Cunningham, "You want to cultivate fans to generate support. I think the greatest thing is the amount of women who follow the Miami Heat. I guess coming from Philadelphia, I didn't see as many of them at the games. We hold clinics specifically for the women; we want to educate the fan. We've tried very hard to do that. We always have well over 1,000 women show up for the clinics. They ask great questions and they're perceptive."

Miami Arena packs 'em in despite a seedy location.

TOM DIPACE

Winick played a big role in raising awareness of female fans. "I suspected men would buy tickets," she says. "I just think it's a different approach to the world. A woman will take care of her family. Not that a man doesn't love them, but a man will buy tickets for him and his son or his buddies. He won't necessarily think of his wife or his girl child—who might be a great basketball fan. And we have a lot of women who are big fans."

In addition to developing a source of new fans, the organization also milks every known means to attract and keep it.

"Our goal is that every night is a great experience," says Cunningham. "Keeping the fan entertained is very important." Included in the Heat's non-stop entertainment package are live bands, taped music, giveaways, a broad concession selection and dancers. "I wasn't thrilled that we had to have dancers," says Winick, "but I figured if we were going to be in the T&A business, we were going to get good ones. That's all right."

"We're a young team and we're hungry right now. We can be like the Bulls." —*forward Glen Rice*

RICHARD LEWIS/S. FLORIDA IMAGES

The downside for a new franchise that does so well so fast is that expectations are sometimes raised unrealistically. But Cunningham is unfazed. To hear him tell it, everything is going just as planned, right on schedule.

"Our fans have been great," Cunningham says. And now he wants to reward them. "We don't want to just become a good team," he says, "but to have a chance to win a world championship. Even before we were awarded the franchise, that was our goal.

"We were hoping to be there about now. You just do your best and try to keep your mistakes to a minimum. Hopefully, it comes together for you. Do as much work as you can putting a group of men together. Then they blend and become one. You do your homework, you evaluate everything. Then you cross your fingers."★

Bill Chastain is a sportswriter for the *Tampa Tribune*.

Much of the Heat's success rests on the shooting of Harold Miner, nicknamed "Baby Jordan."

YOUNG, GIFTED, AND FAST...TOM KENDALL AND SCOTT SHARP

TAKE THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD TO THE TOP BY RICK VOEGELIN

The path to the big leagues is clearly marked for baseball players and aspiring NFL stars: Hook up with a contending college team, hire a street-smart agent, sweat out the draft, and sign on the dotted line. Although imperfect, this system nonetheless ensures a steady supply of talent for major-league sports.

In contrast, the road to motor racing's major leagues is an unfathomable maze. A career path through America's auto-racing farm system can be a frustrating journey filled with dead ends, blind alleys, and unmarked detours.

Consider the travels of Tom Kendall and Scott Sharp, two superstars-in-waiting. They've made all the right moves, winning races and championships in several of the sport's supporting series. They're talented, articulate and fast. But whether they ultimately reach the upper echelons of motor racing now hinges as much on the vagaries of the economy as on their own abilities.

Scott Sharp

Money may be the mother's milk of politics, but it is the lifeblood of auto racing. A baseball player depends on his arm and his glove to make his career, but a driver needs a million-dollar race car. Without a patron or a paying sponsor, the chances of landing a ride with a top-flight team are slim. And in these chilly economic times, big-money sponsors are in perilously short supply.

Kendall and Sharp have traveled similar paths during their racing careers. Kendall, a lanky 26-year-old UCLA graduate with a degree in economics and a fashion-model wife, is the epitome of California cool. Sharp, 24 and single, is a compact Connecticut Yankee with a degree in finance from Babson College and a preference for preppie fashion.

SPORT ARCHIVE

Tom Kendall

Despite their dissimilarities, Kendall and Sharp are kindred spirits. Both were raised in racing families. Sharp is the son of a six-time Sports Car Club of America national champion; Kendall's brother and father have won major road-racing events. Both have proven that they have the right stuff: Kendall won five road-racing championships from 1986 to 1990; Sharp has claimed four championships since '86. They won the SCCA Trans-Am road-racing championship in successive years, with Kendall taking the crown in 1990 and Sharp winning in 1991.

SPORT ARCHIVE

Kendall's true grit became apparent when he came back from a horrific racing accident in 1991 that shattered his legs and ankles. Sharp has been spared such an experience.

Now the two men's careers are on divergent tracks. Kendall has set his sights on NASCAR stock-car racing, while Sharp is aiming for an IndyCar ride.

Anatomy matters in auto racing. The 6-foot-4 Kendall simply doesn't fit the cramped quarters of an open-wheeled Indy racer. "The first thing I think about when an opportunity to drive comes along is, 'Will I fit the car?'" Kendall says. "I used to give my height barefoot and slouching because being big is taboo in racing."

Sharp's compact frame is a better match for a pencil-nosed IndyCar. "I hope to be driving an IndyCar in five years, maybe sooner," he says. "It comes down to making a decision about which direction to go. I've loved road racing since I first drove a go-cart, so the idea of competing in an oval-track series like NASCAR just isn't appealing."

The chances of either driver achieving his goal depends on more than talent and determination, however. "In these economic times, sponsorship is crucial," Sharp notes. "It's hard for sponsors to take a risk with a new driver."

Kendall shares Sharp's concerns. "From my perspective, NASCAR is the healthiest racing series, but it's also the most difficult for a driver to break into. It's easier to make a name for yourself in road racing because there is so much support from the automobile companies and tire manufacturers. Unfortunately, there's no bridge between the two types of racing."

As auto racing legends such as Richard Petty, Mario Andretti and A.J. Foyt reach retirement age, young guns such as Sharp and Kendall are ready to move up to the big leagues—if they can find their way through the motorsports maze.★

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NFL PLAYOFF PICKS

WHO'S HOT AND WHO'S NOT IN POSTSEASON PLAY

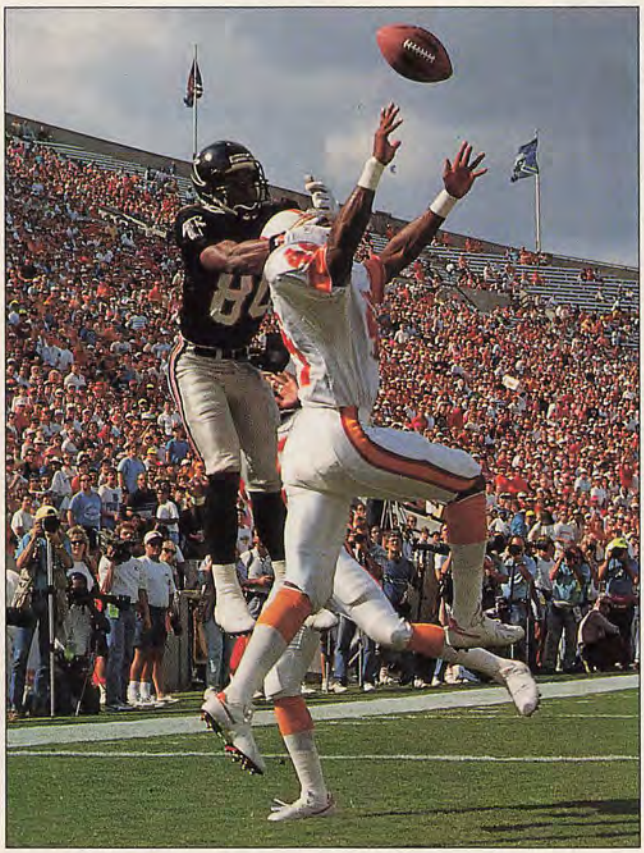
Want to start the new year off right? Use the following guide when betting the NFL playoffs and Super Bowl, and you could add some loose change to your pockets.

UNDERDOGS GO WILD

When the Houston Oilers knocked off the favored Miami Dolphins at the Orange Bowl in the NFL's first wild card game in 1978, a precedent was set. In the 14 years of wild card play, the underdogs have won 22 of the 42 games outright and have gone 28-14 vs. the point spread, an incredible 67 percent winning percentage.

The startling success of these 'dogs could be linked to the general parity in a first-round playoff matchup. None of these teams represents the NFL's true muscle. Only the Oakland Raiders have won a Super Bowl as a wild card team; they knocked off the Philadelphia Eagles in Super Bowl XV back in '81. With the talent virtually equal at this level, take the underdog with the points.

In the divisional playoff round, the favorites shine brightly, having gone 44-19 straight up since 1976. Favorites and home teams have identical 36-27-1 records vs. the point spread (the home team, of course, usually *is* the favorite) for a solid 57 percent winning percentage. Over the past 15 years, teams that have been favored in the 3½-to-9½ point range in the divisional playoffs have gone 28-16-1 vs. the points.



AL MESSERSCHMIDT

Teams that have been favored by 10 points or more, however, have not fared as well. In the last 15 years, double-digit favorites are just 4-5 against the spread (44 percent—with two of those wins coming last year).

CHAMPIONSHIP MOMENTUM

Conference championship games have overwhelmingly gone the way of the favorite. NFC and AFC championship game favorites have identical 13-8-1 records vs. the spread (62 percent) since 1970. Home teams have been even stronger, going 32-12 straight up and 28-14-2 against the spread (67 percent).

Want a sure thing? Pick the team you like to win the game, ignoring the point spread, because the straight-up winners in conference championship games are 22-2 (91 percent) against the spread over the past dozen years. The only times the winning team hasn't covered the spread? Washington was a 10½-point favorite over San Francisco in 1983 and won 24-21, and Buffalo was an 11-point favorite last year against Denver and held on to win 10-7.

SUPER BOWL SELECTIONS

More than $3 billion will be wagered illegally on the Super Bowl. Another $50-to-60 million will be bet legally in licensed sports books in Nevada and London.

As with conference championship games, the key to Super Bowl Sunday betting is to ignore the point spread and focus only on who will win the game. The spread has been a betting factor in only three of the 26 Super Bowls, meaning the team that has won the game outright has covered the spread an astounding 90 percent of the time. The favorites have covered the spread 13 times, the underdogs 12 times, and there was one push, back in '79 when Pittsburgh knocked off Dallas, 35-31, as a four-point favorite.

In recent years, over/under wagers have become popular. This is a bet on the total amount of points scored in a game. Since

BY DANNY SHERIDAN

ANOTHER SUCCESS STORY

Dear Strength:

I first saw the Strength Shoe four years ago at Kevin Bannon's Superstar Camp in Trenton, New Jersey. I thought the results were too good to be true. After my wife and I talked to you for thirty minutes, I decided to put my oldest son in the shoe. He went from barely touching the rim to dunking the ball. His increased speed and quickness were the two areas that impressed me the most. I could see it in his legs.

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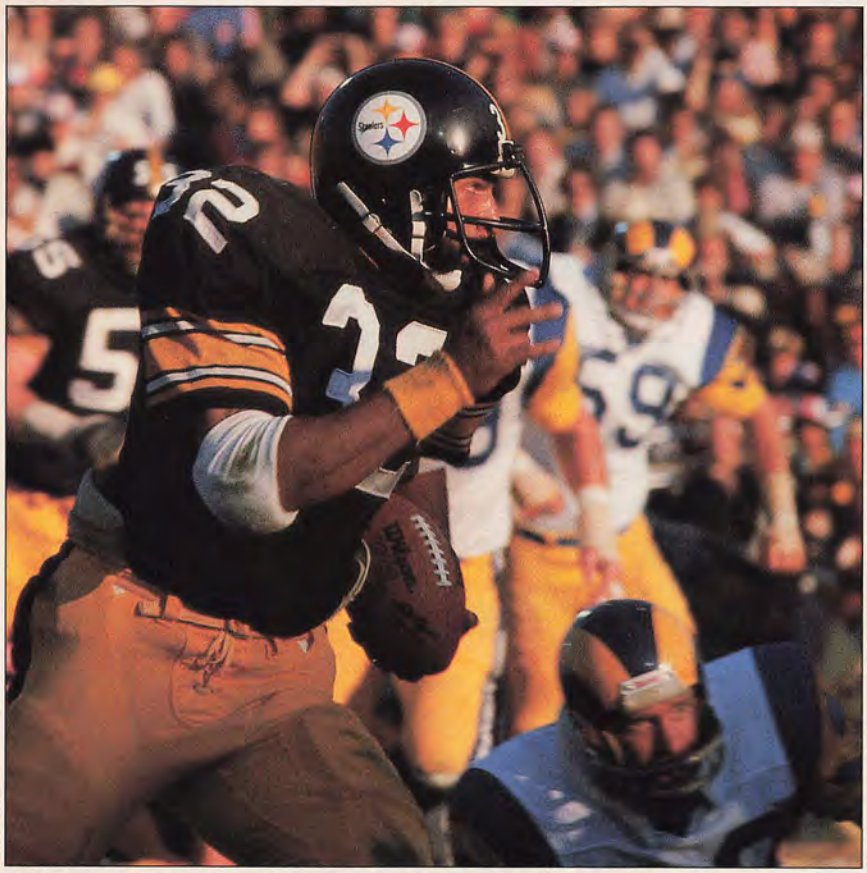
1980, the "overs" have covered in eight of the 13 Super Bowls (62 percent).

This year, Super Bowl XXVII will be played in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, host of four previous games. Results of the previous Pasadena Super Bowls reveal telling trends. In Super Bowl XI, Oakland beat Minnesota, 32-14; Pittsburgh knocked off the Rams, 31-19, in Super Bowl XIV; Washington, led by the running of John Riggins, powered past Miami, 27-17, in Super Bowl XVII; and the Giants thumped Denver, 39-20, in Super XXI. Pasadena Super Bowl favorites have gone 3-1, and significantly, the team that won outright covered in all four of those games. Washington, the only underdog in the group (three-point 'dogs), beat Miami straight up.

Another salient stat from the Pasadena Super Bowls is that in all four games, the point total has exceeded the over/under betting line. There's a good reason for this. Pasadena offers picture-perfect weather and the most well-behaved fans in the country. Playing conditions are ideal: no domes, no artificial turf, no humidity. The game's played on beautiful green grass under gorgeous blue skies. Conditions are optimal for high-powered offenses to rack up huge point totals. In fact, in three of the four games played in the Rose Bowl, the team that trailed at halftime rallied behind strong offensive attacks to win. So don't be surprised if points are scored in bunches on a glorious Super Bowl Sunday.

SHERIDAN'S SUPER BOWL FACTS:

*The team that scores first has won 73 percent of the time (19-7).
*The team leading at the half has won 76 percent of the time (19-6—Super Bowl XXIII was tied at the half).
*The team leading after three quarters has won 81 percent of the time (21-5).
*NFC teams are 14-12.
*NFC teams have won the last eight Super Bowls.★



SPORT ARCHIVE

Pittsburgh knocked off the hometown underdog Rams in Super Bowl XIV under picture-perfect Rose Bowl conditions.

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12-13 correct: Sports genius
9-11 correct: Good fan
6-8 correct: Working too hard
3-5 correct: To the showers
0-2 correct: Try knitting

SPORT MAGAZINE

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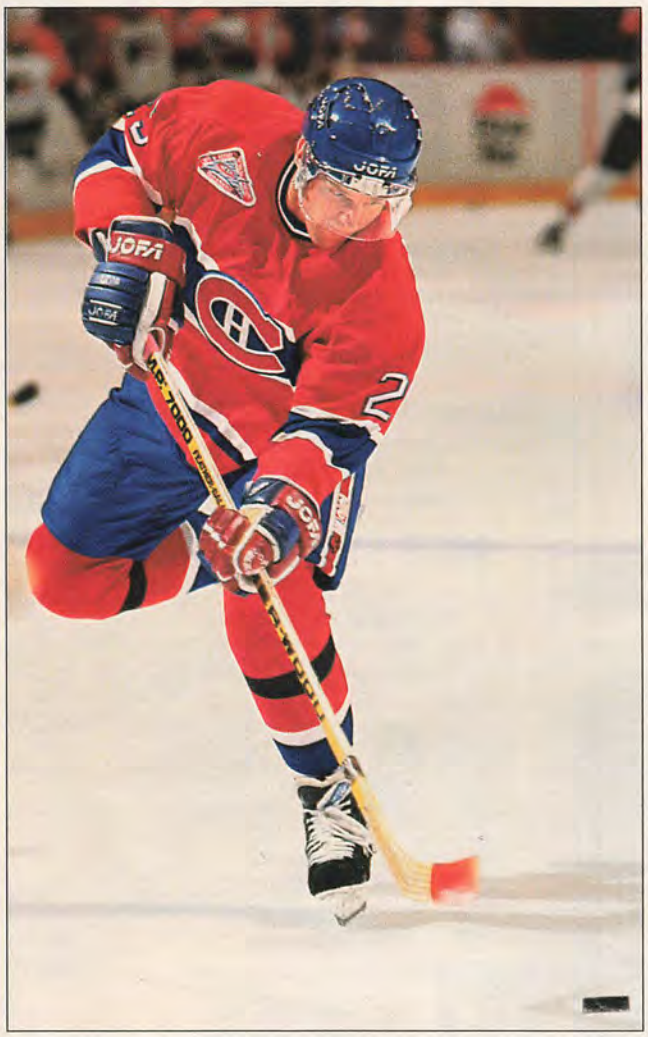
1 This NHL player (pictured) scored four goals in the 1991 All-Star Game. Name him.

2 Which NHL player was the MVP of the 1992 All-Star Game?
A. Mark Messier
B. Patrick Roy
C. Brett Hull
D. Mario Lemieux

3 Who is the only defenseman to win an NHL scoring title?
A. Paul Coffey
B. Ray Bourque
C. Denis Potvin
D. Bobby Orr

4 Mark Macon is one of five members of the Denver Nuggets to have recorded 150 steals in a season. Name the others.

5 Last season, which NBA player had the most personal fouls?
A. Sam Mitchell
B. Patrick Ewing
C. Rik Smits
D. Tyrone Hill



M. DIGIROLAMO/ BRUCE BENNETT STUDIOS

6 Match the player with his first NBA team.
A. Charles Oakley
B. Pervis Ellison
C. Reggie Williams
D. Mitch Richmond
1. Clippers 2. Warriors
3. Kings 4. Bulls

7 Name the last NFL player to recover two fumbles in a Super Bowl.

8 Which quarterback threw for the most touchdowns in a Super Bowl game?
A. Terry Bradshaw
B. Doug Williams
C. Joe Montana
D. Jim McMahon

9 Running back Preston Pearson played for three Super Bowl teams. Name them.

10 Who was the leading receiver in Super Bowl XXVI?
A. Art Monk
B. Gary Clark
C. James Lofton
D. Don Beebe

11 Name the only NFL team to appear in a Super Bowl during the 1960s, '70s and '80s.

12 In 1992, which team led the National League in home runs?
A. Atlanta
B. San Diego
C. Philadelphia
D. Chicago

13 Lou Brock led the National League in stolen bases for four consecutive years, from 1966 to 1969. Who broke the string?

—William Ladson

STUMPER

Name the first athlete to win consecutive Olympic marathons.

JANUARY 1993 STUMPER ANSWER

Gus Johnson ["Name the first NBA player to smash a backboard."]

THIS MONTH'S QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Vince Dampbousse 2. C 3. D (1969-70 and 1974-75) 4. Bobby Jones, T.R. Dunn, Fat Lever and Michael Adams 5. D (315) 6. A-4, B-3, C-1 and D-2 7. Mike Singletary (1986) 8. C (five) 9. Baltimore (1969), Pittsburgh (1975) and Dallas (1976, 1978 and 1979) 10. B (114 yards) 11. The Oakland/Los Angeles Raiders (1968, 1977, 1981 and 1984) 12. C (138) 13. Bobby Tolan

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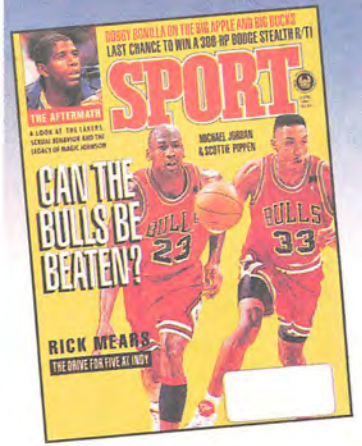
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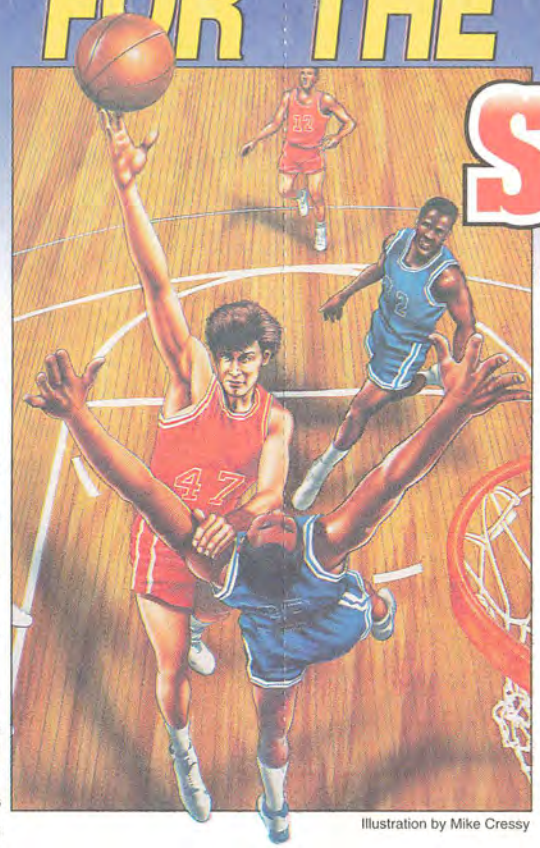

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